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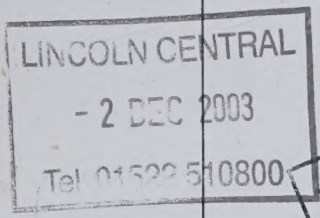

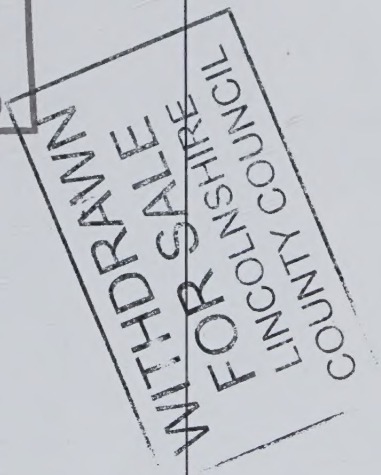

MILLER

Rural sketches

L.83

RURAL SKETCHES.

BY THOMAS MILLER.

AUTHOR OF

"A DAY IN THE WOODS," "BEAUTIES OF THE COUNTRY,"
"ROYSTON GOWER," ETC.

WITH TWENTY-THREE ILLUSTRATIONS.

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LINCOLNSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL

TO

SHARON TURNER, ESQ.

F.S.A. R.A.S.L.

THIS VOLUME

IS

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

IN SINCERE RESPECT,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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MANY of these pages treat upon subjects with which I have so long been familiar, that I feel but little delicacy in offering them to the public. They will find their portion of readers, receive their share of censure and praise—then be laid aside and forgotten, like many a better work. Some of the papers, I have no doubt, will just awaken sufficient interest to keep them afloat during their short day,—especially such as treat upon every-day life, and those domestic scenes which have fallen under my own eye, and which must, therefore, have the merit of being original. Many literary men, whose opinions I set great store by, have often expressed a wish that I should sketch such subjects as have come under my own experience; and in five or six of these papers I have attempted the task; and on their reception depends the working out of my plan. If they are approved of, I

proceed further; if not, there are other paths in literature which I can still pursue. I am one of those doomed to "grind at the mill;" and although compelled to a certain extent to pander to the public taste, yet much inclined to feed them with wholesome food: if they refuse to swallow it, I must work on their own grist. My table is spread with the humblest fare; my viands served up in beechen bowl and pewter platter. Those, therefore, who can only dine from off vessels of gold and silver, and whose stomachs cannot brook the homeliest food, need not lift up my lowly latch, nor bend their stately bodies to enter my humble doorway. Such guests may meet me another day, when I have thrown off my "russet grey," and come out to play my part in a circulating library. There, like Caleb Balderstone, will I rub my pewter platter until it shines like silver; and if they bring it not too near the light, force them half through their meal before they have discovered the cheat. Here, however, I have not room to play these antics.

One paper, in particular, I must point out in this volume: it contains remarks on the works of William Brown, a writer of the Elizabethan era, and a true poet. On this article I have bestowed more than usual pains, and done my very best to make his writings more known; for they are truly rural, and therefore cannot be considered much out of place in the present work. Humble although my

object may be, I have ever written with a view to implant a deeper love of Nature in the bosoms of my readers; and if fame has hitherto been my chief reward, the labour has, in most cases, been one that I loved.

THOMAS MILLER.

Elliott's Row, Southwark,
March 21, 1839.

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RURAL SKETCHES.

HOME REVISITED.

"As a long-parted mother with her child
Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting,
So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my Home."

SHAKSPEARE.

THE commonest objects become endeared to us by absence; things which we before scarcely deigned to notice are then found to possess strange charms, bringing to the memory many a forgotten incident, and to the heart many an old emotion, to which they had been dormant for years. Never did these thoughts and feelings come upon me more strongly than when, a few months ago, I left London to

visit my native home, — to place my feet upon the very hearthstone by which I had sat when a boy. Mine was no affected feeling, no imaginary delight, but a mad, wild eagerness to look upon the old woods and green hills which had been familiar to me from childhood, and to which my mind had so often sailed on the dreamy wings of pleasure, asleep or awake, just as fancy wandered.

The old house was still the same, and everything it contained seemed to stand in the very position that they occupied twenty years ago; there was no change, saving that they appeared to look older, somehow more venerable; but the alteration was more in myself than the objects I looked upon.

I gazed upon the old clock, and fancied that the ancient monitor had undergone a great change since my boyish days; it seemed to have lost that sharp clear clicking with which it greeted mine ears when a child, and when it told the hour, it spoke in a more solemn tone than that of former years. I looked upon the brass figures which ornament the old clock-face, until fancy began to trace a resemblance between myself and them; in former days they looked bright and gladsome, they seemed not to bend under the huge load they supported; but now they have a care-worn look about them, and what they seemed to bear once with a playful grace, now hangs upon them like a burthen; their brows, too, seemed heavy, as if they had passed away long years in painful thought. The gilt balls, which decorate the tall case, were tarnished; the golden worlds into which my fancy had so often conjured them were gone; the light that played around them in other days was dimmed; the sunshine rested upon them no longer. I heard the clock-chains slipping at intervals, as if they could not keep pace with time; they seemed weary with long watching; they could no longer keep a firm foot-

hold down the steep hill which they had traversed so many years. I looked on those ancient fingers, now black with age, and which were bright when they pointed out my hours of pleasure. They no longer told the time when my play-fellows would call upon me to wander into the green fields,—they warned me that it was nearly the hour for the delivery of letters, and I became anxious to hear from those whom I had left nearly two hundred miles behind me;—another home and other cares came before me. I called memory a coward for thus reverting to the past. I summoned him before me, and he stood up in my own likeness,—a boy who had seen but twelve summers. I looked upon him, and saw that he was unworthy of the notice of Care; that Sorrow disdained to buckle her load upon his back; but gave him his own thoughts for playthings to amuse himself with, until he could learn the great game of life. I saw why the tempest passed over him harmlessly, for, like a lowly plant, he had no bulk to oppose to its might, and had only, after long years, become a mark for the storm, with bole and branches strong enough to wrestle against its power. "The finger of Heaven," exclaimed I, "guideth all things aright."

My eye fell upon the old mirror into which I had looked twenty years ago, on which I had gazed when a child, and marvelled how another fire and another room could stand within the compass of so small a frame. It gave me neither flattery nor welcome, but gravely threw me back, seated by the same hearth which I had so often scrawled over with the mis-shapen figures of men and monsters when a boy. We confronted each other with a familiar boldness, as if proud that we had stood the wear-and-tear of time so well. We looked seriously, but not unkindly, upon each other. The image in the mirror seemed as if it would have accosted me, and had much to utter, but its lips be-

came compressed, as if it scorned to murmur. It gave back another form for a moment,—a lovely maiden stood arranging her ringlets before it,—but that was only fancy, for I remembered she had long been dead. The very crack which I had made along the old looking-glass, when a boy, with my ball, seemed like a landmark dividing the past from the present. I could have moralized for hours on that old mirror.

On the wall hung the large slate on which I ventured to write my first couplet: what I then wrote was easily obliterated; my ragged jacket cuff was the willing critic that passed lightly over my transgressions, and shone all the brighter after the deed. I knew not that such men as authors lived; every book was taken up without a suspicion of its lacking truth, and strange as they might seem, I felt proud in the wisdom I gathered from their pages. I could point out to my playmates the green rings which the fairies had made on the grass, tell them the very colours which the elfins wore, or show them a valley which resembled that wherein Sinbad gathered his diamonds. Ignorance was then bliss indeed!

Beside the slate hung the old valentine which had been addressed to my mother when a girl; my glance shifted from the picture to herself, and I tried in vain to recal the day when she received it; her grave features mocked every effort of my fancy, nor could I imagine that there ever was a time when she ran laughing to her gay companions to show her new valentine. Her venerable grey hairs, her deeply-furrowed brows, over which many a sorrow had trod, seemed too solemn ever to have unbended over those hearts and flowers, and that curious scissor-work, which must have been the labour of many a long hour. The very writing had become yellow. I wondered if she ever thought of her "Old Sweetheart" when she rubbed off the dust from the glass

on a Saturday,—a task which she had done regularly for above forty years.

Then there was that old tea-board, with the stately lady in a garden on the centre, herself overtopping every tree. But that tray was only used on rare occasions, real "white-cake-days," when some cousin or aunt came to tea; and the mended china was handed carefully from the corner-cupboard, and the blue glass sugar-basin, which I hoped some day to see broken, that I might have the bits to spy through. The old white table was still in the same place; and its long drawer seemed at last to have found rest,—tops, marbles, and fishing-tackle, which it was opened a score of times a day to rummage for, were all gone; there is no danger now of running fish-hooks into their fingers when they open it. "Robinson Crusoe" and "Robin Hood's Garland" are gone. That old drawer was a true index to my mind in those days;—they who looked therein might discover the true taste of its occupier; old and worm-eaten as it may now seem, it has contained the greatest literary treasures—the works of Shakspeare and Milton.

How little it took to make me happy in those days! A dry crust from the large bread-crock, which yet stands under the old table; Shakspeare, or a volume of Scott's immortal novels; a day of sunshine,—and that a holiday,—and I had but to traverse a single street, enter Foxby Lane, and bury myself in the woods, to reach my own heaven. No pride,—no object,—no ambition,—poverty was never felt, and therefore unknown; so long as the bread-crock furnished forth its crust all was pleasure, for the clear brook in the wood was never dry. Ariel passed not a happier life than mine under "the blossomed bough."

And have I forgotten those days? No! I traversed the scenes with as much pleasure last summer as ever I felt in

my boyhood. And, oh! pardon me, if for a moment I felt proud at the thought, that the emotions which I had gathered in those lovely solitudes had been wafted to a thousand hearths. I carried the sweet sights and sounds of the woodland with me into the huge city, and many a time, while bending over my lonely hearth, they have come upon me like music from Heaven, and I have "blessed them unaware." From the low humming of unseen insects in the air, to the heavy murmuring of the bee, as it flew singing from flower to flower, or was lost amid the drowsy brawling of the brook, had my heart become a treasurer of their melodies. There I first heard the solemn tapping of the woodpecker, measuring the intervals of silence; and saw the blue-winged jay as she went screaming through the deep umbrage, startled by the harsh sounding of the woodman's strokes. Sometimes the grey rabbit stole noiselessly as a spirit past me through the long grass, or the ruddy squirrel caught my eye as he bounded from branch to branch. There the melancholy ring-dove struck up her mournful note, and was answered by the cuckoo, as she stood singing on the tall ash that caught the sunshine by the side of the forest. Then up flew the lark, carrying his "tirra lirra" heavenward, until he was lost amid the silver of the floating clouds, and the wide azure of the sky rained down melody. Sometimes a bell came sounding solemnly over the distant river, (glimpses of which might be seen here and there through the trees,) until the deep echo was broken by the dreamy cawing of the rook, or the lowing of some heifer that had lost itself in the wood. Anon the shrill "chithering of the grasshopper" fell upon the ear, or the tinkling of sheep-bells, mingled with the bleating of lambs from the neighbouring valleys; or up sprung the pheasant with a loud "whurr," the sunshine gilding his gaudy

plumage as he divided the transparent green of the underwood in his hasty flight. Sometimes the rain fell pattering from leaf to leaf with a pleasing sound, or the wind arose from its slumber, muffling its roar at first, as if to awaken the silence of the forest, and bid the gnarled oaks to gird up their huge limbs for the battle.

Nor was it from the deep woodlands alone that all these sweet sounds floated; hill and valley, and outstretched plain, sent forth their melodies until the very air became filled with dulcet sounds, made up of all strange harmonies. The plough-boy's whistle and the milk-maid's song mingled with the voices of children in the green lanes, or the shouts of labourers in the fields, as they called to each other. Then came the rumbling of huge wains, and the jingling of harness, mixed with the measured tramp of some horseman as he descended the hill. The bird-boy swung his noisy rattle amid the rustling corn, or the mower ceased his loud "rasp, rasp," and leant upon his scythe to wipe his brow, or listen to the report of some gun that sent its rolling echoes through the valley. Sometimes the baying of a dog, or the clap of a far-off gate, was mingled with the sound of the hunter's horn, or the crowing of cocks, as they answered each other from the distant granges. The shrill plover wheeled above the wild marshes with its loud screams, while the bittern boomed in hollow concert from the rank sedge. When the village was neared, the humming of human voices came louder upon the ear, or the sounding of the thresher's flail was broken at intervals by the tinkling of the blacksmith, until all was lost amid the gabble and deafening clamour of some neighbouring farm-yard. Many of these old familiar sounds fell pleasantly on mine ear when I revisited home; some of them coming upon me like departed voices, which, although not forgotten, make the hearer start when he finds them so near at hand. They

reminded me of scenes gone by,—of companions who are now dead,— of happy hours that can never return,— they came full of foolish regrets, and

> " Silly truths
> That dally with the innocence of love
> Like the olden age."

Then up rose a thousand mute objects in the landscape, which had haunted me when far away, by unconsciously shaping themselves into the imagery of thought, and diffusing their colourings over my pages. They had imprinted their forms upon the mind years ago, and ever stood present to view when Fancy turned her eye home-ward. And many a time, amid the storm and darkness of winter, and in the silent watches of the night, had those scenes presented themselves, lighted by as sweet a sunshine as slumbered there when I looked upon them. The old mill still stood with its huge sails resting upon the sky boldly and darkly, as when I watched the moon rising between them, and fancied her some monster with outstretched wings, newly alighted from the clouds. The distant hills upheaved their green heads, bright and beautiful, as they had done twenty years ago, when I wondered what new world outstretched beyond them. The deep water rolled as rapidly under the dark arches of the old bridge as when I launched my paper boats upon the eddies, and stepped across to see them float through in the sunshine, and, when any of them was wrecked, sat down to draw sad comparisons between their fate and the voyage of life. I traversed the path of the water-course to where the old mill-wheel cast up its boiling silver, and as it went round

> " With its unemptied cloud of gentle rain,
> Threw an eternal April on the ground,
> Making it all one emerald."

Further on stood a well-known cottage, covered with thatch and numberless creeping plants, that were scarcely distinguishable from the foliage of the huge elm by which it was overhung; the blue smoke still curled amid its branches as if the tree bore its own sky, or the quiet dwelling was roofed over with its own little heaven. Beyond rose the ridgy forest, like a dark boundary that marked the confines of earth and sky! its huge trees seemed slumbering upon the deep blue of heaven in all the gloom and grandeur of by-gone years. I looked upon their familiar summits with a strange sensation of melancholy pleasure, and thought that I might never see them again. Scarcely a gnarled and moss-covered stem, or a grey and weather-beaten gatepost, appeared without recalling some past recollection—of some book I had read — some companion I had conversed with — or the discovery of some new beauty in Nature. On that particular spot I had watched the sunset, and traced the last golden cloud that closed over his trailing splendour, or waited there until the veily twilight was let down from heaven, and the whole landscape shadowed under its starry curtain. Further on I had stood in the early morning to watch the same scene unrol itself, when tree and turret broke through the melting mist, as if they had never before looked upon the light: or some angler, in his picturesque dress, moved spirit-like across the dim landscape until his whole figure became clear and distinct; and beyond him the fleece of the first sheep separated itself from its cloudy veil, and the sturdy steer broke his light covering as he arose to feed again upon the dewy pasture. Then the tall church-spire rose like a pillar of sunshine against the sky; and the windows of the distant hall flashed back the burning brightness: until the calm river bared its glassy breast, and the tall willows gave a silvery shiver as they shrunk before the day's first breeze.

Nature was then my picture-gallery; the works of the Great Master were open before me, and I looked upon them with as much delight as if they had been my own; as if every hill and valley, wood and river, had only been made to glad my soul. Even amid the smoke of this big city, I love to hang my walls with a few rural scenes; and, although it requires a great effort of imagination, endeavour to trace a resemblance between them and the green spots that my memory worships. What the artist has left undone, fancy at times readily fills up; if he has given me a rude stile overhung by a ruder hawthorn, I remember some cottage-girl with her arms folded, bending over just such a scene. If a dash of paint, that has a wet look,—it was there that I saw her stooping down to fill her earthen jug. Should it be a brown barren bank, fancy either covers it with flowers, or places some shepherd boy thereon asleep, his dog looking after the flock which have sprung up from the stones that are here and there scattered on the winding road. I cover his cottages with woodbine, and garland his ruins with ivy; people his trees with rooks, and hold up my hand to make a shadow just where I would have it to fall. If he has omitted to throw the sunshine over his bright parts, I wait until the first beam appears, or place it in a proper light, well knowing that when he has done his best, he must fall far short of Nature, and despair of painting such skies as spread above us, displaying all their cloudy glories as if they defied man to enter into contest with the Colourer of the heavens.

Reader, whoever thou art, I would in this paper carry thee back to the days of thy childhood; if thou art old and grey-headed, and art sitting alone pondering over these pages, close them for a few moments and recal the days of thy youth. Thou mayest not have been a dreamer like myself, nor given to lonely musings; but has thy memory never stepped through the cloud of years, and dwelt upon old

scenes and by-gone times? never heard voices babbling by thy hearth that are now silent? nor heaved a sigh for the past? Oh, no! there is no one, girded within the green hills of England, without this feeling; the very savages will shed their blood to defend the graves of their fathers.

Whence spring these emotions? Are the charms which memory throws around our home and our early days wholly imaginary? Are these associations merely enriched by fancy, made pleasing or melancholy because they have passed away for ever? My answer would fill pages, and I leave it to the hearts of my readers to reply. How much do I pity the ignorance of those who have beaten their brains to prove that the heart and mind are only affected by some chain of regularity which they find in the scenery of nature, some fixed property that is either high or low, rough or smooth, curved or straight, and can be almost reduced to a yard and foot measurement to come at their beauties. If we are struck by the particular beauty of a picture, do we pause to reduce it to a system, to look at it bit by bit, and endeavour to discover some peculiar spot in which its great charm lies? Or do we, when gazing upon a lovely face, endeavour to fix upon an eye or lip alone, as if there the whole spell centered? Or, when the mind is carried away by some delicious melody, seek afterwards for one particular note, as if all the effect was found there? No! we do none of these foolish things: the objects naturally arrange themselves before the imagination, the sounds come home at once to the feelings, and that internal perception which belongs to our nature is instantly kindled. Volumes have been written upon this subject, and argument upon argument advanced, which rather perplex than make plain the truth of the matter. On none of these shall I comment, but give a simple sketch of my own early days; when I first awoke to a perception of the beautiful in nature, leaving my readers to

draw their own inference from my limited experience, and only advancing such facts as bear upon the present subject, trusting that what may seem wanting in modesty in thus alluding to myself, will be excused for the sake of the truths which I shall record.

When a boy I was fond of solitude, and knew no greater happiness than to wander alone among hills and woods, or by the wild and unfrequented banks of rivers. The same feeling clings to me now; and I can tell those who are so ready to sneer at the scenery around London, that there is many as lovely a scene within two hours' walk of this big city as ever skylark carolled over.

I am no cockney, but, until the last five years of my life, passed the whole of my days in the country; was nurst in the very heart of hills and woods, and have travelled on foot through almost every county in England when I went in quest of employment; yet I do here contend, that (excepting mountains) there is as much beautiful scenery within two hours' walk of London on the Surrey side as ever the hand of God created. Pure English pastoral scenery, hills, and woods, and streams, verdant valleys and green uplands, and all that the heart of man can wish for in rural scenery. All I regret is, that not one out of an hundred who live in London know anything of these sweet places. they have never gone in search of the many pleasant footpaths that lead to this beautiful scenery. Oh! that my pen had but the power to arouse its tens of thousands of inhabitants out of their smoky alleys, to look upon the lovely landscapes that stretch in every direction around them. Why slumbers the genius of the metropolis? there is more than one true-bred cockney among its literary men better able to picture the beauties of the country around London than I am. Why is it not done? We have plenty of twopenny-halfpenny "Guide-books" which contain no

more poetry or spirit than a farthing rushlight ; let there be something fresh and green got up for the amusement and instruction of the thousands who are walled within this huge city ; something that would do more than tell the inhabitants where Jenkins and Smith and Hickinbottom live ; something, I mean, that will take hold of their hearts. If what I have here advanced may by some be considered wrong, it is nevertheless what from my soul I believe.

But to return to myself, (a subject which too many men shrink from in these days, because fashion brands it as egotism,)—I was passionately fond of these solitudes. There could be no pride, no affectation in it ; a poor ragged boy, such as I then was, with a crust in his jacket pocket and a book under his arm, could only do these things because his soul loved them, for he neither knew the world, nor cared a straw for its opinions. One spot in particular I loved in my boyish days, even long before I knew that Shakspeare had fixed upon it for its singularity: it was within an hour's walk of my birthplace. It was that very spot which caused a dispute between Hotspur and Glendower, in the First Part of Henry IV, when the map of England is produced, and Mortimer points out the "three limits," into which the Archdeacon had divided it. Hotspur says,

> "Methinks my moiety, north from Burton here,
> In quantity equals not one of yours ;
> See how this river comes, me cranking in,
> And cuts me from the best of all my land,
> A huge half-moon, a monstrous corner out.
> I 'll have the current in this place dammed up ;
> And here the smug and silver Trent shall run
> In a new channel fair and evenly :
> It shall not wind with such a deep indent,
> To rob me of so sweet a bottom here."

The "silver Trent" no longer winds like a "huge half-moon;" the "monstrous corner" is cut off, and the river at this hour runs "fair and evenly" through that neck of land which caused the vessels to make a circuit of nearly five miles, within the memory of man, without drawing an hundred yards nearer the end of their voyage. A sailor has been known to throw his hat across this narrow isthmus, and after having traversed the whole line of banks, around the immense bend, pick it up as he passed, the distance he had thrown it being all the space he had gained after his long journey. Such an unnecessary circuit was, of course, a great grievance to those who navigated the river, especially the "haulers," men employed to tow up the vessels by ropes; and one winter, when the river had overflowed its banks, and inundated the neighbouring marshes, it tore through a great portion of this narrow neck of land. Help, as may be expected, was near at hand, and it is rumoured that the work of one night made a channel navigable for vessels. I have heard mention made of the name of the first man who sailed through the new channel, and of those who assisted in that night's great work. But it was many years ago — long, I believe, before my time; but if I err not, there are those living now who could, if they choose, say much on this matter, and who have looked upon the "monstrous corner," and seen many a white sail gliding around it. But the ancient villages of Burton and Bole no longer stand by the side of the "silver Trent," as they did in Shakspeare's time: the river now rolls nearly two miles away from them; it is long since their grey church-towers looked down upon their shadows in the water. The bed of the river is dry. I have peeled osiers in its deep and ancient channel, and spent many an hour in hunting for the nest of the plover on its wild and sedgy banks.

I know not how such scenery might affect others, but to my boyish fancy there was something strangely wild and pleasing in traversing the bed of that ancient river,—in planting my foot on a spot where, for hundreds of years, the waters had rolled, even, perchance, from the day when the Omnipotent said, "Let there be light." To think that the ancient Briton might have paddled his wicker boat above my head; that Alfred might have sailed along the "hundred-armed Trent," and passed over the spot where I then stood, when he came unaware upon the rude abodes of the savage Danes, startling them by the sight of his oared fleet, as they stood, half-robed and half-affrighted, peeping between the wild willows; or that, in a period more remote, the tramp of Roman soldiers might have affrighted the bittern from her nest, and sent her booming above their ranks. Then I had but to ascend from the green bed of the river and climb its sloping banks, to look over the loveliest of landscapes, — hill and wood in the distance, grey, or green, or cloud-like, just as the face of Heaven turned thitherward, and uplifted or let fall its many-coloured veil of clouds.

My reading at that time was every way as confused as my thoughts. Poor Mrs. T——! where is now the remains of that old library of thine,—those ragged and tattered volumes, which even the very rats seemed to have forsaken? Dear old lady! many a time have I come trembling when I have owed thee a penny, fearing that I should be refused the perusal of another armful of odds and ends. Many of thy venerable tomes had lost numberless pages, and sometimes whole chapters. Vol. I. had never seen Vol. II. for many a year, and Vol. III. had often no predecessor; and fine work was it for the fancy to fill up these huge gaps, and to give such a beginning and an ending to the works as the author himself never dreamed of. A

strange medley was that old library; a wild chaos of ragged pages, piled together without any regard to order: histories, travels, voyages, and shipwrecks, plays, poems, romances, and fables, — some perfect, others torn and mangled by forgotten hands. All these were devoured with avidity. I had no one to explain difficult passages to me, no one to guide my mind aright, or throw light upon those parts which were beyond my own understanding. Unlike the dry learning of schools, where the heavy and useless task is conned through many a weary hour, these books were my greatest delight. I read them with an eager earnestness, a mad relish of pleasure, such as only a boy can feel: under trees in old woods, among the hills, wild lanes, or on the pleasant banks of rivers, did I retire, and murmuring to myself, like a bee abroad in the sunshine, sipped the honey from those old volumes. Then it was a pleasure to arise with the sun, and begin my daily task early, for when the allotted labour was done, the remainder of the day was my own, and many a time have I accomplished by noon what, for a boy, was considered a heavy day's work. Oh! when shall I ever again feel that wild gladness which carried me away from myself, and sent my heart and soul into another world, where there was neither "fever nor fret," where Sorrow never looked sad, and Care carried a sunshine on his brow!

Then was I indeed happy. I had discovered a world which was all my own. I was a mighty King and reigned over time; my dominions extended to the uttermost end of the earth. I had silver valleys, and tall mountains in the clouds, and could at will traverse the blue floor of the sky, and thread the winding walks along the starry steepness of Heaven. The magician's wand was found — I could conjure up the mighty dead, and people the green hills with departed forms,— could hear Homer's voice in the

storm, and catch the sweet whisperings of Shakspeare in the low rustling of the leaves. I was like a child turned loose into a field covered with flowers, who runs hither and thither with outstretched arms in wild delight, then throws himself down, and with each hand grasps a tuft of the gaudy bells, and believes himself the possessor of all he has seen. My mind was filled with strange thoughts; it reflected back a thousand rich colourings, all confused and intermingled, like the sunbeams that pass through the deep-dyed windows of a cathedral, "streams of all hues." Truth was blended with fiction, and both were broken by fantastic shadowings and chequered lights, which resembled the stained lattice itself. Sun, and moon, and stars, and clouds, floating with their silvery drapery flowing loose, and winged seraphim, mingled in splendid barbarity, and were interwreathed with kings and warriors, angels and fairies; while over all arched the glory of Heaven, and shot down its sunlight in a blaze, to illuminate this imaginary and dreamy world. Scenes of chivalry passed before my excited mind; the spirit-stirring days of battle and banner, and all the gorgeous pomp of heraldry, swept along under pillared domes in clanking mail, with fluttering pennon and waving plume, and shields on which the rampant lion flamed in gold. All these were massed together like the gliding imagery of a dream, where faces peep out through the silver curtaining of sleep, then pass away and drop the vapoury folds through which they appeared. They came and went without form or order; they were made up of past, present, and future; they were like a rich banquet called up in sleep; and there the soul held glorious revelry—the heart seemed as if it was steeped in the sunshine of an eternal summer. But these visions have nearly all passed away. They sprang up then in my heated imagination, like weeds and flowers that flourish together; and even now, I fear, they shoot up with

too equal a pace, for no watchful gardener ever tended their growth.

Then I could pause between the pages of my book, and, looking out over the lovely landscape, call up the fancied features which it had worn a thousand years before. There stood the altar of the Druid amid that clump of oaks; the white beard of the grim priest appeared in the cloud that showed itself through a vista in the branches; his flowing drapery was half-hidden amid the foliage. The wolf had made his lair under the dark ledge of the shaggy embankment. I could even now point out the spot where a thousand times my fancy has seen his eyes glare. Further on, was Cæsar encamped; the Roman eagle caught the sunshine as it streamed along the woodside. In the distance rose the rude huts of the ancient Britons, their roofs wearing the colour of the surrounding forest; a solitary deer stalked through a green glade. Then the scene changed,—I heard the heavy tramp of the Norman soldiers beyond the hills; it was night, and a Saxon village was in flames; the firelight fell along a vast waste of moorland, beyond which rose a forest. I heard the shriek of women, and saw their dishevelled hair, as they rushed across the moor with their children, and sought shelter in the wild wood. Here and there the form of a Norman horseman stood out amid the blaze, resting in bold relief on the fiery-fronted sky. Then the warring angels of Milton mingled with the flying women of Peter Wilkens. I heard the rushing of their wings somewhere above the hills, where the brook came headlong from the heights. The dragon of the Ripheanwood confronted the merrier one of Wantley. A woman fled with her child into the desert. I saw the figure of St. George on a milk-white steed, threading his way through a desert between the hills. Aladdin stole by with his wonderful lamp. The Forty Thieves waited until night-

fall in a coppice near the town. Oberon and Titania held their revels in the moonlight, and an hundred dainty sprites did

"Hop in my walks, and gambol in mine eyes."

Then passed in long array the creations of Bunyan; I saw the Slough of Despond on the swampy marshes, or looked beyond to the distant wicket, where stretched the walls of Beelzebub's castle, high and embattled; — Great-Heart and Giant Despair swept by. I heard the roaring of the lions, and saw the cave strewed with human bones. The sun sank over the Delectable Mountains, and the forms of the shepherds faded away in the descending twilight until all assumed the look of the Enchanted Land, or, amid the darkness rose the Valley and Shadow of Death. Even the river-depths were peopled, and the clouds mirrored therein, were the roofs of crystal palaces, where Nymph and Syren dwelt, and bore the bodies of the drenched mariners to coral couches, and sang over them their wild sea-songs. These and a thousand other such waking visions were ever before me, all interspersed and varied like a field of flowers in May, and never looked upon without producing a feeling of deep delight.

Such were my boyish reveries; nay, if aught, more highly coloured than I have here given them, and I doubt not but there are thousands beside myself who have had similar thoughts and feelings, although they have never adventured to give them utterance. I have at times tried to imagine the feelings of a man who is about to emigrate, fully convinced that he never again will look upon his native land—to my mind, it brings thoughts allied to death. I could fancy that I was going away to die—going to live somewhere until Death came—in some huge prison, with a gaol-like sky above it, and an area that might stretch hundreds of miles with a wide sea around it, on the margin of which I should wander alone,

sighing away my soul in wishes to regain my native land. Everything would be strange to me, the landscape would call up no recollections; I should not have even a tree to call my friend, nor a flower which I could say was my own. Ah! after all, it is something to look upon the church-yard where those that we loved are at rest, to gaze upon their graves, and think over what we have gone through with them, and what we would now undergo to recal them from the dead. Reader, pardon these childish thoughts—they forced themselves into my mind, and I have recorded them; they seem to awaken my memory anew and strip me of a score of years: they have a foolish hold of my affections. But surely it is a worthy passion to cherish; there seems something holy about the past; it is freed from all selfishness; we love it for its own sake; we sigh for it, because it can never again be recalled; even as a fond mother broods over the memory of some darling child that is dead, as if she had but then discovered how much her heart loved it. Still, if we all clung with a like affection to the scenes of our childhood, this would be but a spiritless world; the soul of adventure would die away, knowledge would be on the wane, discovery would make but little progress; and that high intellectual state, which so many have gained, would be but little aspired to. It is, perhaps, a truth, that many of the charms which we discover in the past are imaginary; that they only become pleasing through associations, and that the reality is just what the mind thinks, or the heart feels, while contemplating them: admitting this to be all, it is even then a high intellectual enjoyment. The generality of mankind reflect too little; it is not the mere reading of books alone that ought to engross the mind; a thousand volumes may be perused, and the reader find himself but little improved after such a task. There are thousands who spend all their leisure time over books, who but rarely draw

their chairs towards the fire, and pass away an hour or two in silent thinking, in holding a solemn converse with themselves. We have within us a huge volume, full of deep interest and experience, the pages of which are too seldom examined, although they teem with simple truths. Let us look at a few of its plainest passages. We are sitting here now — we remember those who formerly assembled around this very hearth;—where are they? What should we have been if such a one had lived? What threw us into our present position? A few angry words have, perchance, altered our situation in life: we were too proud to explain, or we pined for a change. Mere chance perhaps caused us to leave our native home, or there are many events linked with the change.

Many remembered scenes and familiar faces pass through the mind while it is in such a state of contemplation. We seem to live over again the past scenes of our life, and our natures become solemnized after such reflections. I speak not of the necessity of preparing for another state of existence; but if we inure the mind to look steadfastly and seriously on the past, we school it almost imperceptibly for the approach of death. Our notions of death become divested of those terrors which are too often and with bad taste exaggerated: we contemplate it as a natural change, — one which is as sure to come as darkness closes upon the day. We look beyond the grave with the eye of faith, and humbly hope to mingle again with those we loved on earth. Our mind becomes hallowed by the images which pass over it; our thoughts are resting-places for the past, — the ladder by which we seem to ascend to heaven, and on which the spirits of those whose memories we cherish descend.

Riches are not always attended with happiness, nor has poverty misery alone for a companion. An intellectual mind is the surest wealth: contemplative man can create

his own happiness. Many a rich man is too often a slave to fashion: he tugs at the galley in chains of gold. To one who, like myself, has been compelled to forego the quiet of rural life, the false gild and glitter of the multitude is more apparent. I look round and see thousands whose lives are spent in search of empty pleasure, in the wearisome monotony of fashion and parade, as if they only studied to drive from the heart all substantial happiness. Society has too many forms, too many customs that signify nothing, as if they were but established to kill time, to make the very least of the hours which they pass together. How small a portion of the time and expense dedicated to mere form and show, would suffice for the spreading of true happiness, for binding together a knot of kindred hearts which might be made to beat like one,—a concentration of sympathies in place of those pretended friendships that spring up, the mere shadows of a night, and melt away like the morning mist. These are not alone my own sentiments, they have fallen from the lips of men whose names rank high in the present day; they have found that there is a want of heart in a mixed and strange society, a want of happiness in the gayest assemblies, a lack of sincerity in the greetings of fashion, a grave mockery in the formal introduction, a frowning welcome too often covered over with a false smile. Yet what crushing and jostling do we daily see among the thousands who are ever eager to be foremost at this splendid misery; they rush to fashion in fifties, and leave true friendship to brood over his own hearth alone. Those who have a kindred feeling with each other are dispersed in these assemblies; the man of wit is surrounded by a circle who must have laughter; the man of genius wastes his thoughts on a group who have grown tired of each other, and have no relish for the beauties which he brings before them;—and all this is done in the very teeth of common sense,

and at the sacrifice of common comfort, because it is a custom. And what is the cause of all this sacrifice but a want of storing the mind with intellectual treasures, of making a dwelling-place therein to which the soul could fly with pleasure, and there find real happiness! All the elements of good feeling are found there,—nay, in the veriest slave of fashion you often find a man with a right heart, one who wastes his kindness on a multitude, and is never thoroughly appreciated. Such men, we have seen, attempt to diffuse cheerfulness in a dull company; but it was like hanging up a lamp in a sepulchre,—the light fell only on the dead. Those who have the largest circle of acquaintance have in general the fewest friends: mankind oftener meet together for amusement than to benefit each other: and many there are who endeavour rather to make themselves feared than loved. True, you sometimes meet with those in the glitter and pomp of this empty parade that you could take to your heart for ever—those with whom you would like to walk, and talk, and make friends of — whom you would give your very soul for, if you could but redeem them from the fire of fashion; but you find with regret that they have drunk too deeply of the enchanting cup, and that to meet them often you must lift the poisoned chalice to your own lips. It perhaps but ill becomes me to make these remarks; however, I have have no false dignity to uphold, and have therefore blundered them out believing that they are the truth.

After all, I fear my endeavours are too Quixotic; and I may better succeed in recalling the minds of my readers to a remembrance of what is rural and beautiful in Nature, than in bringing about that old-fashioned English heartiness which is daily decaying. I have a great inclination to mend many things which are going wrong in the world;

and although my rough country notions may have sprung from error, I cannot resist the opportunity of giving vent to them occasionally, conscious that he who means rightly will soonest obtain pardon for doing that which is wrong. I should like to see society so constructed, that when they meet together after only a brief absence, the meeting should be as pleasurable as "Home Revisited" in reality.

OLD CUSTOMS OF TRAVELLING.

"And soon a passage-boat swept gaily by,
Laden with peasant-girls, and fruit, and flowers,
And many a chanticleer and partlet caged
For Vevay's market-place."

ROGERS.

AMONG the many changes which have taken place within the last twenty years, none have undergone a greater alteration than the system of travelling. Formerly, a journey of ten or twenty miles was considered a great event, a matter that was talked over long before-hand, and required no small preparation. "Ah! an it please God, I shall sleep many a mile off to-morrow night," some old farmer would say as he stooped to unbutton his gaiters, and paused be-

tween every button, wondering who and what he should see, and going to bed an hour or two earlier, that he might be on his journey betimes. Perchance he took his rosy-faced wife with him; and John had strict charge over-night to give either Jewel, or Diamond, (whichever carried double best,) an extra feed of corn, and strict command to see that the pillion was put on fast, "for the misses is bound to ride behind me o' the morrow."

Goodly steeds were these Balls and Jewels, and Diamonds, on whose backs I have many a time been mounted in my boyhood,—backs as broad as a table, and on which us youngsters used to sit like tailors. But then they were such sober animals; you would just as soon think of a full-wigged, long-robed, grim old judge, bursting out into a loud laugh while wearing the black cap and about to pass sentence, as one of these old family horses, shying, running away, or playing any tricks. True, they would trot; but, oh, how unlike any other horse's trotting! It was a voluntary "shog, shog, shog," as if they were trying to shake the very shoes from your feet, and begun just when they took it into their heads, or were tired of walking. What a good understanding was there between one of these old roadsters and the farmer and his wife, whom he so willingly and quietly bore to market!—Poor fellow! they would as soon think of sending their little grandson Dick to the next town with the large basket of butter and eggs, as they would of riding old Ball up a steep hill. No: the old man alights very carefully, then helps his bonny dame down; and as she smiles perhaps when he is about to catch her, he says, "Thee and thy sins are a featish weight together, my old girl;" and he looks tenderly upon her, well knowing that her greatest crime would not disturb the most tender conscience. Having seen that the basket is safely buckled on the pillion, they jog merrily a-foot up the hill together;

and if Ball should take a fancy to a mouthful of the short sweet grass beside the bank, why, they wait patiently; and perhaps the kind-hearted old dame gathers a handful of primroses, and says, "Nanny Sanderson's bairns always look for a few flowers when I leave their week's butter."

They pass the hill-top before they mount again: there is no need to hurry. They had breakfast over by five, and Lincoln is only twelve miles: if they are there by ten, they will be soon enough. Perhaps they stop and have a pint of ale and a "snack" at the sign of the Blue Bell in the valley, and give old Ball a mouthful of hay. He is patted, and whisks his ears and tail to and fro with delight, for he well knows that his master never gave him an unkind word; and before mounting again, the old farmer slackens the girth: he would not sit easy if he thought it pinched old Ball: no, he would sooner run the risk of rolling himself and his bonny old dame to the earth together. On they go again as steady as the current of a brook in summer, the rosy house-wife throws one arm around her husband, and the fine old fellow feels proud that she confides her safety to him. Sometimes he pulls up to survey his neighbour's fields, and thinks that such a pasture would be better if the eddish were eaten down, or remarks that some hedge needs a few more quick-sets. Perchance the very farmer who owns that property will dine with him after the market is past, and over their ale and pipes they will discuss these matters. Such was the old system of travelling to market; and a few thrifty couples may yet be found who still make one pad carry themselves and their commodities once or twice a-week to the next town.

Another, and by far the more picturesque method of travelling to market, is by the market-boats; for such are they called, and are seldom in requisition at any other time.

Numbers of these are still in use on the beautiful river Trent, and are no doubt built in the same form as they were three centuries ago. I have often marvelled that our painters have not looked more narrowly into the country for subjects. They might find groups as beautiful on the rivers of England, as those which grace the canals of Venice, or dot the waters of the Rhine. I would not grudge a few days' hard writing if I could thereby persuade our tourists to explore a little deeper into their own lovely country: there are spots in England that will bear comparison with the proudest scenes of France or Italy, and contain as much poetic beauty, saving only the savage grandeur of the mountains, as any portion of the praise-bespattered Continent.

I care not what travellers may say about the long-haired and black-eyed daughters of other countries, I will match the fair maidens of merry England against any foreign commodities which may be imported, and back the beauties of my own native Trent against any of the *belles* of the Rhine. What faces may be seen floating on a market-day in summer down the "hundred-armed river," as Milton has beautifully called the Trent,—what pure red and white! Some have accused me of only looking on the bright side of things, and colouring the commonest objects in my pages; I cannot help it: I see so much that is beautiful in the world, that I cannot pause to contemplate the horrible. Like the boy who would see none first on Valentine-day but his own sweetheart, and shut his eyes until he heard her voice, so do I avoid describing, as much as possible, that which is painful or miserable.

Our market-boats are similar to those lighters so common on the Thames, saving that the hold is generally covered in, and that so strongly as to bear passengers, when other parts of the deck are overcrowded. It is a beautiful sight to

behold one of these old-fashioned boats gliding along within twenty yards of the shore, on the sunny mornings of summer; and to see young and old seated thereon side by side, old women in their scarlet cloaks and black gipsy bonnets, and bonny lasses in their best "bib and tucker;" for they generally array themselves in their holiday costumes on these occasions. Then, what treasures are piled upon the deck, or stowed away within the hold; what a gabbling and clamour amongst the turkeys, geese, ducks, and every variety of farm-yard fowl; what piles of fruit; what stores of butter, eggs, and cheese! and, oh! above all, what gossip, and—shall I write it?—what secret envy!

Betsy whispers Sally, that Fanny seems too proud to speak to them this morning, since she's got that new shawl and Leghorn bonnet on; and, marry, after all, she looks but a fright; and they would not wear such an ugly shape, no, if they might have it for nothing! And Fanny keeps her eyes riveted upon the butter-basket, which, for lack of room, she is compelled to hold upon her knee. Then some old woman inquires of Fanny what she intends to ask for butter that day, but Fanny cannot tell,—she will see how the market goes; and she again fixes her eyes upon the basket, for she dare not look around lest she should see everybody eyeing her new clothes.

Then there are Farmer Jobson's daughters; and they both have got new riding-habits on, and they begin to converse with one another, and remark how stupid it was of father not to let them have the two horses to ride on to market, especially when they had donned their new habits. But old Jobson heard them not: "Jack wanted Diamond and Jewel that day, to carry a little manure into th' far paddock; so both the young missesses mun go by th' market-boat."

And they do go; but never was motion so near a stand-still as it is with that boat. What a while they are passing the willow tree on the bank! there is time enough to sleep, dream, and awake again, before they will advance the length of that field. They had the tide in their favour for the first two miles, but now the current is about to turn, and two men must haul the boat along. The ropes are thrown out, and two brawny "mud shovers," (for they are never called sailors who manage such craft,) with trowsers turned up, and their heavy boots laced high up the ancle, place the noose of the rope over the right shoulder and under the left arm, then, folding their arms on their breasts, with heads bow-bent, they move leisurely along, by "bank and shore, and tree and stile."

What a body of water is borne along before the head of the boat! They are truly "Dutch-built," with prows as round as an apple. What room would there be lost were they made sharp a-head! How could they possibly pack those immense hampers forward, if they were built after any other model: they are aquatic stage-waggons, the ponderous four-wheelers of the river.

Deuced hard work is that hauling, and almost "drags the very heart out!" Then the men have to keep below the bank, and at every stride sink over the boots in mud. What a time they are lifting up one leg and putting another down! True, they might move quicker, but "could they hold it out?" Reader, if ever thou goest into Lincolnshire, try if thou canst keep up a brisker pace than theirs only for two hundred yards. Then what stoppages! There is the sloop Ann, bound for Burton Stather,—she is coming the contrary way, and, as it is but little beyond high water, she must also be hauled, and either one set of haulers or the other must let go their lines; then they have to be drawn into the boat again, or they might be

broken. When the vessel has passed, the rope is again thrown ashore, and it is wonderful to see the distance to which a skilful waterman will throw the coil of one of those towing lines.

On they go again, slowly and steadily; the men who are dragging the boat along "sweating like brocks;" it is complete "horse work;" but no horses are allowed to haul above Gainsborough bridge. Any one standing on the opposite bank, would imagine that they never could reach the market town before sunset. But they will be home before then. The current will be in their favour back; and if they have started at five in the morning, and, after the first hour or so, go but a mile and a half the remainder of the way, they will arrive at their journey's end by ten. The market will be over by one; two hours for shopping and their dinners; and home again by seven. Slow but sure is this old system of travelling.

Nor must we pass down the river without observing the different ferries on a market-day,—the broad, flat-bottomed ferry-boats, bringing over droves of sheep, swine, bullocks, horses, and horsemen, with pretty village girls, who may be seen moving along the river-banks with their various loads, —some carrying them on the head, and others on the arm. Nor are these ferries crossed without accidents; vessels passing will sometimes run athwart the boat, or the horses take fright and plunge into the river. The ferry-men are generally brave, brawny fellows,—an amphibious race,— who at times run many risks, especially in the night, when they are aroused to carry over some drunken farmer. In winter, too, theirs is a perilous occupation, when the river is swollen with the rains, or filled with masses of floating ice: many a tale could we tell of accidents "by flood and field," but they would be out of place in this chapter.

The heavy "pack-horses" have long been out of date, and all that now serves to remind us of this very ancient mode of travelling with merchandise is some ale-house sign. What sensation must the entrance of these venerable travellers have created in the remote towns and villages in the olden time, with the jingling of their bells, and the clattering of hoofs, and their huge packs of goods strapped securely on the backs of their strong horses to half the height of a man. What a treat would it be now to sit and listen to the conversation of those worthy way-farers, when, after a long journey, they got warmed with humming ale, and told tales of highway-men, and lonely roads, and dark nights, and bales of silks stolen, worth so much an ell, and where they concealed their money, and what struggles they had had with footpads. A rare paper will we write some day on these matters ere long.

Then there was the old postman in war time, who used to blow his horn as proudly as an ancient herald, and enter the town with a long sword by his side and a brace of loaded pistols in his holsters. A great man was the old postman, thus mounted on his raw-boned steed, in former days, and many a poor horseman was glad to travel in his wake to the distant market-town. And oh! to see him do his sword-exercise in the Black-head parlour with the poker on an evening! Few, I deem, who heard him talk, would like to make an attack on him in the day-time when armed and mounted.

What sturdy fellows were the old waggoners! men who never travelled more than two miles an hour, and halted either to bait themselves or their horses at every road-side inn. How the heavy wheels of their ponderous wains ground down the ridges of the ruts; and with what difficulty did they travel when the roads were bad! How the

heart of the foot-beaten traveller was overjoyed when he saw one of these huge vehicles approach! What a *time* he might ride for a shilling; and what a comfortable nap he might enjoy on the straw! Then what pretty faces might be seen sometimes peeping out from between the tilt!—a mother and her children journeying to some distant town, where her husband had found employment. Even the husband himself, when seeking work, had begged a ride of the old waggoner; perhaps he had then no money to pay his fare. But when he got employment he went to the inn where the old waggoner put up—where he had halted for many years—the inn itself perhaps called the Waggon and Horses—and there they drank their cup of ale and smoked their pipes together. And the poor father sent money to his family every week by the old waggoner, and he would charge nothing for his trouble, but take part of a cup of ale now and then. I wish I could paint the old man the first time he sought out the poor mechanic's wife, and counted out the few shillings from his old yellow bag, and gave the children a penny each out of his own pocket, and told them that some day he should take them all to see their father. Well, they are on their way now, and every time the old man stops to have his pint of ale, he asks the poor mother to drink, and cuts off a large piece of his bread and cheese for the children. God bless him for it!

Who that has read "Roderick Random" can forget the scene in the waggon, where Joey grumbles at Captain Weazel because "he won't suffer the poor waggoner to make a penny;" and where poor Strap pitches upon the stomach of the captain, and the lady regrets "that they did not wait for the chariot;" and the old usurer chuckles at Jenny until he brings on a fit of coughing. Rare fun, I doubt not, might be found in these rude conveyances in the olden time. Then what important men the waggoners

themselves must have been before stage-coaches became common. We read in Roderick Random of the dinner being prepared for the waggon people just as it awaits the coming in of the coach in the present day. Joey would not be one to hurry off his passengers in a quarter of an hour, as they do now; no horn to sound then just as the best dishes appeared. But the system has beaten itself; not half the people stay to dine now that did formerly: you are scarcely seated before you hear the announcement "coach ready." They cannot let well alone.

Next come the old carriers' carts—rickety vehicles, that poke their way from village to town about twice a week; sometimes carrying two or three passengers, and giving some old woman or other a help on the road with her butter-basket. Oh! how I love to see these old-fashioned conveyances winding along the green lanes of merry England,—their grey, rent, and weather-beaten tilts, rocking above the tops of the hawthorn hedges, the crack of the whip, and the "gee whoa" of the drivers ringing over the quiet fields. But they are daily dwindling away, and I am (perhaps foolishly) regretting the change. To me, however, they are fraught with pleasant reminiscences, little simple adventures, and boyish incidents, that are perchance, after all, only sweet because they are gone. Well, I have journeyed by them all, have floated drowsily along in the slow-moving market-boat, or little packet drawn by its single horse, been shook in the ponderous waggon, slept all night on the straw, and eaten my breakfast with "Joey." I have rode home by the village carrier in the sweet mornings of summer, when I could alight and gather a handful of flowers, and overtake him again without hurrying, or stop and look for birds' nests in the hedges that were white and fragrant with the blossoming hawthorn; I have rolled along the rapid

and almost breathless railways, shot up the rivers in the swift steamers, and been tossed all night on the stormy sea, sat behind four good horses on the stage-coach, and after all must confess, that I dearly love the old Customs of Travelling.

RAILWAY TRAVELLING.

"Now there is nothing gives a man such spirits,
(Leavening his blood as cayenne doth a curry,)
As going at full speed—no matter where its
Direction be, so 'tis but in a hurry,
And merely for the sake of its own merits;
For the less cause there is for all this flurry,
The greater is the pleasure of arriving
At the great *end* of travel—which is driving."

Byron's Don Juan.

Assuredly we cannot now complain of the flight of Time, since we have so many inventions for treading hard upon his heels. The genius of man has, in many instances, gained the mastery over the elements: we no longer hear that "The King said sail, and the wind said no;" for now thump goes the steam-engine, and away glides the ponderous vessel, with the wind and tide waging war in her teeth. Ariel need no longer sing—

"Full fathom five thy father lies;"

for the diving-bell would speedily reach him, and all the sooner if his bones were made of coral. Where only the eagle once soared, Monk Mason now studies, he being one of the few authors who

"Into the heaven of heavens has presumed,
(An earthly guest) and drawn empyreal air."

What would our forefathers have thought had they been told, that within a few years we should be dragged at the

tail of an engine at the rate of thirty miles an hour? — that we should be hurried through the very bowels of the hills up which they have so often panted, and led on only by fire and water, — clear a deep darkness at which they would have quaked, — a cavern that extended for a mile or two under the earth, and would be passed in twice the number of minutes. What would the highwayman of the olden time think now, could he arise and view that street of carriages, bearing inhabitants who would out-number the population of many an English village? Turpin and his Black Bess would stand aghast: his "Deliver or die," would be lost amid the rumbling of wheels, and his favourite steed dead-beaten ere he could get alongside to vent a volley of oaths. Even fearful old ladies would shake their silk purses at him in triumph, and children point their pop-guns at the grim old robber with a malicious grin. The old market-boats and creaking stage-waggons that we now pass on the road, seem to move like tortoises, compared with the mad gallop of the railway-carriages. The engine appears like some unearthly monster, that never once breathes during his journey, but is ready to burst at the end of the race, and upheaves the pent steam from his iron nostrils with louder roarings than the fabled dragons of old. He is fed on fire, and shod with iron, and death is the doom of all he tramples upon.

The poetry of travelling is gone, — the romance of road-side adventure is at an end: in vain will the modern novelist attempt to distinguish his heroine in the passing train, — forms and faces glide by like the mingled colours on a schoolboy's whipping-top, — an amalgamated mass of hues which the rapid motion seems to blend into one. Elopements may now be made in safety, if the lovers can only secure the first train; asthmatical old guardians can never give chase — the rapidity with which the vehicles move will

prevent the short-winded from breathing: no being overtaken by brothers; duelling and changing horses, and separate rooms, are at an end, — our light literature must now become woven with steam, — our incidents must arise from blows-up, and love be made over broken legs; while here and there the novelist will have to record the falling in of a tunnel, the only chance left "for a touch at the sublime."

The good old days of chance courtship have vanished: if a lady happened to let her glove fall from the coach, there was an opening for some gallant to leap off and return it with a good grace. But now there is no stopping; one might as well call upon the wind as upon the conductor to check the speed of his fiery dragon; 'tis as much as the guard can do to make him hear with his shrill whistle: ere one can say "my hat's blown off," we have shot a mile a-head, and the conductor mourns the accident at the next station; and there is no lack of sympathy at the distance of thirty miles. The tables within the carriages are like those which held the feasts of the enchanters: whatever is laid upon them less weighty than a brick, is whisked away by a viewless spirit, and carried you wot not whither. Wo be unto the wight that layeth down his gloves, handkerchief, or umbrella—that unlooseneth his pocket-book, to spread out his letters, for they will be given as a prey unto the winds, unless he carrieth his own curtaining, or is rich enough to travel in a first-class carriage. Then there are those gloomy tunnels opening their grim portals to receive us, and darkening around us like the valley and shadow of death. You are immersed within the bowels of a black cavern, — the groaning monster which has borne you away utters his most hellish moans in the darkness,—flakes of fire here and there flutter along the low-browed vault,—the earth seems rocking beneath, while one dull, prolonged echo

throws back the continued clatter. Perchance a solitary lamp is fixed in the roof of your carriage, and the sickly yellow light falls upon the face of some wrinkled old man who has closed his eyes from fear. All beside is dark,—nothing is visible but that hideous face in the distance. At first he appears like a fiend; you cannot separate him from the flakes of red fire, the darkness, and the bellowing of the monster. By degrees he becomes a bandit: you have seen just such a face in the caverns in Salvator Rosa's pictures: then he is dead,—his face grows sharp and thin in the yellow light,—his eyes move not under the lurid gleam,—you are in the tomb with him! By-and-by you feel the wind of heaven upon your cheek,—the daylight breaks in upon you, and you are again rolling between upheaved banks, or on the brown backs of massy arches,—rubbing the flakes of soot from your face, or writhing under some sharp particle which has chosen your eye for an abiding-place: you seem as if racing against the wind, and that, out of sheer vexation at being beaten, it blows with all its might, as if it would lift the heavy train from the ground.

Still there is something spirit-stirring in this speed: you feel the great triumph of man, and share in his mighty victory over time and space. If wearied with the dust and din of London, you have but to trust yourself with this modern dragon, and in a few minutes he will vomit you forth where the sky-lark is singing, and the flowers of summer are in bloom. Railways are in keeping with the bustle and hurry of the present day; their journeys are as speedily performed as a new poem is forgotten; they skim along like a young lady through a modern novel, who sees a tree here, a face there, and a town farther on, and is at once at the end of her task and her journey. Nothing will be ventured on, when the railways are completed, longer than

a sonnet, or a song of three stanzas for a short stage. One of the large old folios would serve for reading while a journey is performed half round the world.

The old road-side houses will fall to decay, and the picturesque little towns and villages will be forgotten, or only brought to mind while hunting over our old scrap-books. The smiling chamber-maids will arrange their ringlets in vain; the bonny daughters of our hosts think no more of new patterns or new dresses,—there will be none but the village peasants to whom they can display their finery: the dashing young travellers having all gone by the train, the rural beauties of England will be forgotten. The member of parliament will be startled by a whole posse of his constituents just as he is preparing to set out for the House; they having seen on which side he voted the previous night, and jumped into the first train with the intent of threatening to send a new member unless he does their bidding. The thief will be spending his plunder a hundred miles off, while the police are in search of him amid the alleys of London. The plot of our plays will turn upon some young miss, who, sent down into the country in the carriage No. 10, contrived to apprise her lover, who, safely ensconced in No. 1, walked comfortably off with her at the end of the journey.

But I have jested long enough, and confess that I love not this break-neck work, this breathless hurrying through the world, this skip-jack, money-making rapidity. It is not characteristic of our nation—it accords not with the heavy tread and sure and stable movements of John Bull. The contrast is too sudden, too startling, too unnatural,—it bears not upon our language, our looks, or our country,—it would better accord with the chatter and jabber of the French, and seems a meet conveyance for some spider-limbed dancing-master, who is in and out and

pirouetting again in the same breath at a distance of twenty miles. Never did I see this better illustrated than during my late journey: one of my fellow-travellers was a bluff old farmer, who looked as if he had ridden his own sleek Dobbin for a score of years, who had never had the air of heaven thrust down his throat at the rate of a mile's length in a minute. Poor fellow! I pitied him. But oh! how he enjoyed the luxury of alighting!—how he patted his fat horse when it was released from the train!—what a treat was the slow pace at which he rode! He paused under every tree which he passed, to satisfy himself as to whether they bore branch and leaf as usual, for his eye had seen nothing during the long quick flight but masses of green that looked like painted boards—neither sky, nor cloud, nor sunshine streamed through them. And those high-piled, monotonous embankments but reminded him of the rough walls of empty and roofless barns. He pined for the greenery of the earth; he revelled in the slow pace at which he went, and would have to ride miles before he regulated his lungs to their proper breathing-time. Nay, 'twas averred by a wicked wag that the honest old man had inquired what church-yard we were passing when the engine was at full-speed, for his eyes ached at the rapidity with which we passed the grave-stones; and when told that they were mile-stones, he exclaimed, "Locky daisy me!" and marvelled more than ever.

Well, if steam is only "in its infancy," as many aver, Heaven only knows what it will come to when full-grown, or what revolutions will be wrought in the world. How many lives are doomed to be lost ere we reach perfection on land and water is at present a mystery. But surely this is a trifling consideration, compared to the more important one, that Mr. Snooks can have his goods in one-fourth of the time occupied in their transportation formerly.

Besides, in the increase of population, we can afford a blow-up a day at least and nobody be the worse, excepting a few wives and families; and even they have nothing to fear, for new workhouses are springing up daily, as if with an eye to these contingencies. For my part, I cannot see the necessity for all this hurry and bustle—this risk of life and playing with danger—but am of Solomon's opinion, that there is a time for everything. I like those old-fashioned delays on the road, when the member of parliament stopped to dine and change horses at the comfortable road-side inns, and circulated a little of his wealth. I cannot, however, but admire the speculating spirit of my countrymen, who are making roads that reduce to insignificance those formed by the old Romans, and make the walls of China no longer a wonder. But I am one of the few lovers of old fashions; content with the country as God has made it, and with the speed which bore our old forefathers to the grave quick enough, and yet left them time to make their country the greatest nation in the world. And as a proof that I am a true descendant of John Bull, I claim the liberty to grumble — a privilege which I wish all my readers to enjoy.

COUNTRY COURTSHIP.

"Oh, rural love! as spotless as the dove's,
No wealth gives fuel to a borrowed flame,
To prompt the shepherd where to choose his loves,
And go a forger of that sacred name:
Both hearts in unison have beat the same."

John Clare's Village Minstrel.

Love in the country is very often only a wild flower of chance growth; it springs up here and there almost unaware, —sometimes is found by a woodside, in a green lane, or by a garden-gate. John is going to fetch up his horses at the same time that Mary sets out to milk her cows, and they very naturally join in conversation. It may at first only begin with a cold "good morning." But then, hang those cows! they play such freaks, and will often run away without giving a moment's warning: then John, of course, runs

after them, and Mary thanks him for assisting her. Love is a very Proteus, and has before now come in the shape of a gad-fly,—has first spoken in the creak of a gate,—blushed while being helped up with a basket of butter, — sprung up with a swarm of bees, or appeared in the shape of a stray lamb. In a large farm-house, too, there are nearly as many lads as lasses employed as servants; and in summer they all work together in the fields,—eat and drink at the same table when at home, and thus have every opportunity of studying each other's temper. This I hold is a much safer way to choose a wife than mere chance wooing, where miss makes up herself beforehand to be very shy and very modest, and the youth can hardly say "boh to a goose!"—as the old country wives have it. But when they live in "place" together for a year or two, what at first is affected, gradually gives place to reality. They appear to each other what they will be after marriage; and I have known them jog together to the market-town to purchase half-a-dozen chairs, or what not, to start house-keeping with, months before marriage.

There is no secret made of the affair; the old farmer knows all about it, and often cracks his joke in the harvest-field, bringing a colour to Mary's cheek, and a peculiar "sheepishness" to John's countenance, when he says, "Well, John, when's th' marriage to take place? Remember I find a leg of mutton to th' wedding."

"I dunna know, measter," says John, looking at Mary, who has found something very curious in an ear of corn which she is pulling to pieces.—"I dunna know; but we munna be waur nor th' man who took the pig hoam before he got a sty." Then the old people often wonder what young folk can find to talk about when they get together, "gauking" about, as they term it, in the cold; "Marry, courting mun be warm work."

there is no overcoming them. A modern work, even one that had only been published fifty years, would have given one hope; we might have consoled ourselves by thinking that the author had known old grandad:—but Tom Brown,—there is no reconciling it.

But to resume our story. Two of his old servants had left at Michaelmas, to be married, and two new ones were of course wanted to fill up their places; and as the good character which the old farmer bore caused situations at the "Wood Farm" to be much coveted, they were soon supplied from the village; for he preferred having those around him of whom he "knew something." The youth was a fine ruddy fellow, who had but just numbered twenty years, and had spent the last three in service at a considerable distance from his native place; the maiden was a year younger, and as fine a specimen of an English peasant-girl as ever trod upon the daisy.

I was at the farm the first night they came, and remained there for several weeks after their engagement. John came first, shouldering an immense box, which was safely deposited in his sleeping-room, when he took his seat beside the fire and fell to patting Gipsy, an old favourite shepherd-dog, which soon returned his caresses. Shortly after Mary came, accompanied by her sister, the one bearing a bonnet-box and the other a trunk;—the sister was, of course, invited to stay tea along with Mary.

John had many a sly peep at Mary from under his eyebrows, without once moving his head, while Mary looked straightforward into the fire, and platted her fingers one within the other, and seemed anything but at home. Uncle sat smoking his pipe, and Nanny, the other servant, was superintending the cakes.

"Well, John," began the old farmer, "thou mustn't seem at all strange here, my lad. I 've known thy fayther aboon

forty year, and I look upon thee as belonging to my own family, as I call all my old neighbours about here. Thou 's been in Yorkshire, they tell me. I dare say their system of ploughing, and harrowing, and sowing varies somewhat from ours. Is the land in pretty good heart down there? — Mary, thou 'd better draw nearer to the fire, my lass; there 's no occasion to sit away frae it when one 's not forced; — draw thy chair a little nearer, bairn."

Mary drew her chair a little nearer, and John stammered out something about the clay lands being heavy, and the sand lands light; and dwelt upon the different purposes for which they were best adapted, also descanting very briefly and modestly upon some new improvements in the ploughs there used.

"Hey, they are bringing up their new-fangled ploughs here," replied the old man; "but, for my part, I 'll have none of them, but am content to till the fields after the manner of my forefathers. But I do believe, that where the land 's very tough, if the share-beam was broad and thin, and a foot longer than common, it would be no worse. I always have my ploughs made upon one principle; plough-beam good, sheath of dry oak set fast in a mortise; plough-tail smooth and round, not to hurt the hand, the rest pinned fast upon the nether end of the stilt; shelbred secured to the right side of the sheath, and to come over it, and the senbred just an inch, to pass the share with a sharp edge, so that it may turn the earth clearly when the coulter 's cut it."

"A good plan, no doubt," replied John, scarcely comprehending the old-fashioned terms which were made use of.

Meantime Mary had tucked up the sleeves of her best gown, and commenced buttering the delicate short-cakes which Nanny had taken from the oven; and they had started a conversation together in low tones, just loud

enough, however, for us to overhear that Nanny admired the pattern of Mary's gown, inquired whether it would wash well, where she bought it, and how much she gave per yard. To all these questions Mary readily answered, that, as far as regarded its washing, she had not tried it yet, having only worn it three times; but the week before she made her purchase, she had begged a bit for a pattern of the draper, and had found that "it stood its colour capital."

Mary and her sister sat at table with the old farmer and his wife; John never drank tea, and Nanny supplied him with a large brown porringer of new milk; after that, some cold ham and bread, with cheese and a jug of beer. The old man drank but one cup, then "tried a bit of ham;" and they must drink together, so he also had a jug of beer. After tea, Mary began to make herself useful, and washed up the tea-things, while Nanny "looked after th' milk," put up the poultry, fed the pigs, and fetched in the wood for next morning, which she placed on the hob to dry. By and by, two other servant-men came in, looked hard at John, harder at Mary, patted the dog, laid their gaiters over the fender to dry, "tried a little milk, ham, and beer," gave an account of their day's labour, then drew up towards the fire, for the night was setting in.

But we must fancy that John and Mary have been long in their places; that they have "taken a liking" to each other; blushed a thousand times at grandad's jokes and sly insinuations, and only wait the termination of their service to be married. All this we will suppose done, for there would be but little more to narrate of their simple courtship; — their walks together on a Sunday, the many little helps that John rendered Mary when she was hard bestead; — all these are things which may be better imagined than recorded in print. Another group calls for our notice.

Johnny's father and mother, and Mary's parents, are at length apprized of the intentions of their "bairns," and they meet to talk over matters, and see what they can do towards giving "them a lift in getting a bit of a home together." Perhaps they meet to take "a dish" of tea; or the "men-folk indulge, for once and away," in a cup or two of ale. There is no stiffness,—no ceremony, in such business as this; they mean well, and have no secrets on either side; and although there are no lawyers employed, no deeds to draw up or sign, there are many things to discuss. I regret, dear reader, that I cannot bring before thine eye the group that fancy has just called up before mine. Wilkie or Leslie might do it; it should be an interior of a plain, picturesque, homely English cottage, one window overlooking a winding road at the end of the village, or half-covered with the leaves of a woodbine, giving a green softness to the light, and sweetly blending with the sunshine. Two old men and women should form the group, one of the old men with a bald brow, the other with his hair "half-greyed;" costume left to the fancy of the artists, but it could not be too rural. One of the old women should be knitting, or listening attentively to what the other was saying, her head slightly bent, as if she could not hear so well as she did twenty years before. One of the men should hold his pipe a little distance from his lips, and send out a tolerable quantity of smoke, as if he had just made up his opinion on one point of the argument; yet not so hastily but he must watch the last coil of the columned cloud, before he ventured to speak "his mind." His companion should be holding the "ale-horn" in his hand, as if in act to drink; his head, however, averted, enforcing some new truth that had struck him before he lifted the cup to his lips. But it is in vain for me to describe their looks. Alas!

all I can give is their conversation; and we must suppose them to have broken the ice, and to have grown warm, either with the ale-cup or the argument. The furniture, etc., we will leave alone, as much of it will come under the reader's notice during the conversation; here, then, they are already seated.

"I got next to nought to give 'em," said the old man, withdrawing the pipe from his lips, and looking at his wife, as if in expectation of some reply. "Thirty years have I and my old Kate been married, and during that time we've toiled and moiled and scratted a few things together, and managed to pay we're way, and bring we're children up like honest men and women. Thank the Lord! we have always maintained a good character, and if we haven't grown rich, we haven't had the werritting of mind to keep up a high head; a right heart and a good conscience has been all that we have had to guard."

"One 's all enough to do," replied old William, "so far as that goes, to make all ends meet and tie, as the saying is. But, oh dear! what a blessing it is that we 've never had to be ashamed to call we're children one's own, — that they 've never disgraced the name of the son or daughter of a poor but honest man. I remember well when my poor old father lay on his death-bed, — it 's fifty years come next Lammas, — he called us around his bed, and Heaven above knows there were nine of us, and it 's but very little that all our gettings came to then, if put together. 'My dear lads and lasses,' says he, 'I 'm about to leave you all, and I hope, for a better place than this world. All I hope is, that you'll so conduct yourselves, that when you come to die, you 'll have nothing to fear, — that you won't do anything to stick like an iron-mould to the name of Jobson. But I know you are good uns, and won't do an action that would make one skulk behind one's

neighbour, afore all the world, and be ashamed to look you in the face. Never mind being poor,' says he; 'that 's no sin; be honest and industrious and sober, and then you 're sure to prosper.' Poor old chap! his words have often come to my mind, when I 've been over the head and ears in trouble; but I always did my best, betide it what would, and no man can do more."

"Well, we 've all our ups and downs," said old Kate; "and if a-body does their best, who can wish for more? For my part, I 've no mander of doubt of our John making a good husband, no more than I have of Mary being a good wife. There 's some of your fine skimmy-dish misses go to Gainsbro', or Heaven knows where, for a few months, and learn to put bonnets together, and cut out dresses, and stitch and starch, and what not; but, bless us! when they come home they 've picked up such high notions that one hardlings knows them again; and if they get a bit of print to make themselves a new dress, it must be puckered and tuckered, and frilled and flounced, like my Lady Thing-a-bob's, or they never can fancy it. And there you 'll see 'em flaunting about with as much pride, and pomp, and fuss, and stew, as if they were dressed in satin at a crown a-yard. Now, when I was young, if we could get a bit of good home-spun stuff to wear, or a gown of linsey-wolsey, and, mayhap, a bit of bettermost-sort-of-a-thing for Sunday, we were quite content. But, laws-a-massy, set one of these highty-tity thing-um-terrys to set a patch upon a good home-made old shirt, or darn a pair of good-knitted worsted stockings, and they would be ready to drop. As to brewing and baking, and going out to earn a few shillings in harvest time, bless you, the very thought would bring on a fainting fit."

"Hey," answered the other old woman, "as you say, our Mary 's none of these fly-be-sky, milk-and-watter sort of

things, as goes flaunting about in a pair of big sleeves, just for all the world like them big balloons as we see pictures of, which they let off on a night in Lunnun. For my part, I can't bear to look on such codlings; nipped in at the waist like a wasp, and screwing their feet into shoes too little by half, making their toes grow all mander of forms; and cocking their heads aside, just for all the world as if they were wry-necked, or nature hadn't made 'em good enought."

"Well, well," said old William; "we 've all our faults, and young folks will be gay, and, for my part, I don't see much harm in it, providing they come honestly by their finery. But, as I was saying, let 's see what can be done for John and Mary, just to give 'em a start in th' world. For my part, my lass," added he, addressing his wife, "I think we might spare 'em my old arm-chair; — if thou remembers, my father gave it us when we were married, and it 's a good un yet, though, mayhap, a little the worse for wear; and I 'm sure John would set great store by it, for our sakes."

"Hey, bless 'em! they shall have that, however," replied the old dame; "though I shall sorely miss it out o' th' corner, where it 's stood aboon thirty year."

"And we," said old John, looking at Nanny, "mun e'en give Mary the old rocking-chair—it 's what thou nursed her in when she was a bairn; and I dare say she 'll often think on it when we 're dead and gone, — when she 's rocking her own children in it."

"And there 's them six little pictures up-stairs," said old William, "about Ruth and Buzz; they 'll cover one side o' the house; and, I think, we can find 'em a table; then if they buy a yard or two of green-baize and a tea-board, to rear on th' table when it 's covered, and stick a chair on each side, and hang up Ruth and Buzz (they are

coloured and framed), why, you see, there 'll be one side of the house set out quite respectably at once."

"And we 'll spare 'em our little Dutch weather-house," said Nanny; "they 'll find it very useful, and very correct,—the gentleman always comes out when it 's going to rain or snow, and the lady when there 's going to be fine weather; — it will be quite an ornament over the mantel-piece. And we 'll buy 'em a bit of a looking-glass of some of these Italian chaps that come about; they 're apt to alter a body's face a little when one looks in 'em, but I fancy a house looks naked without a bit of a glass; and if they can't raise a fender, they mun make shift with a part of the tire of a wheel—it 's a capital thing to keep th' fire frae burning your toes when you happen to fall asleep beside it."

"Well, and if they should happen to want one," said Betty, "I think I can find 'em an old cradle; it 's been shoved under our bed this many a long year. It may want a bit of repairs; but any of them basket-making chaps as comes round with a few osiers under their arms, will do it for a penny or two-pence, or such a matter. As to pots and pans, they mun buy a kettle and boil their tatoes in it as well as their tea-watter—it will keep it frae slating, and that 's the way we did when first we began housekeeping."

"Hey, my old lass," said her husband, "does thou remember we couldn't raise neither a bed nor bedstead, but went to Gainsbro' together and bought a bit of ticking, and begged a few sheaves of straw of Farmer Watson, and knocked up a bed of that mander of ways, until we could turn ouresens; and how often I used to repeat them old sayings of my father's, 'first creep and then go;' 'Rome wasn't built in a day;' 'egg before the chicken,' and so on?"

"Hey, my lad, I remember all these things well," responded the old woman; "we'd a deal of planning and con-

triving to make ends and corners meet and tie, such as scheming how to make a good deal of broth out of a little bit of bacon; but we were always happy in spite of bein' poor. But I dare say we often slept sounder on our straw bed, than those as lies down on the very best feather pillows, and has their beds covered wi' real moreen hangin's, and has the doctor sent for if only their finger-end aches."

"There's a large old pictor up stairs they may have," said Betty; "it was taken for my mother's likeness, and wan't badly done, only the painter would put a lot of brown colour down one cheek and under her chin. He called it shadow. 'Shadow!' says I, pointing to my mother's cheek; 'isn't this side the same colour as t'other, and where has she any black under her chin?' Marry, it looked as if you might set potatoes in it, regularly ditched with dirt, as if a body's face wasn't all of a colour. Then the fool of a painter said, 'If you shut one eye, you'll see a darkish shadow;' so I said, 'If you shut both your own, you'll see nought at all; for it 'ill be all shadow.' Look at mine," added she, pointing triumphantly to what resembled a large staring doll, but was intended for her own portrait; "there's no shadow there, but all clear red and white, same as I was when a young woman. But, before they have that pictor of my mother, I'll buy a bit of white paint and do it over the nasty dirt that they call shadow—marry, I'd shadow 'em if any of those painter-chaps came to take any of my bairns, and made one of their cheeks, and under their eyes and nose and chin, just for all the world as if they'd never touched either soap or water from the day that they were born."

So matters progress. John and Mary have "scratted" a few things together, and the marriage takes place with the consent of all parties. Old grandad contributes his

mite to housekeeping, and something handsome to the wedding-dinner. All the feasting, and singing, and jokes, we leave to the fancy of the reader. The bells rang merrily, and the village boys gave them a few hearty huzzas as they left the church, just as they had done a score of times before.

Here is a sweet pastoral song on country courtship, — a perfect rural gem,—which was written by Nicholas Breton, and sung before Queen Elizabeth, at Eltham, as she opened the casement of her gallery window in the morning. It is so very beautiful, that I cannot resist placing it here, as a fit conclusion to country courtship.

COUNTRY COURTSHIP.

" In the merry month of May,
In a morne by break of day,
With a troope of damsels playing,
Forthe I went forsooth a-Maying.

" When, anon, by a wood side,
Where, as May was in his pride,
I espied, all alone,
Phillida and Corydon.

" Much ado there was, God wot;
He would love and she would not;
She said never man was true;
He says none was false to you.

" He said he had loved her long;
She says love should have no wrong.
Corydon would kiss her then;
She says, maids must kiss no men.

" Tyll they doo for good and all;
When she made the shepherd call
All the heavens to witness truthe:
Never loved a truer youthe.

" Then with manie a prettie oathe,
Yea and nay, and faith and trothe,
Such as seelie shepperds use
When they will not love abuse.

" Love that had beene long deluded,
Was with kisses sweete concluded,
And Phillida, with garlands gaye,
Was made the Lady of the May."

THE OLD COACHMAN.

O'er all his passengers he reigns as King,
Yet unto every one is underling;
And those who cannot live from him asunder,
Gratefully in his care he 'll take them under:
In worth and excellence he does outdo them,
Yet being above them, he still seems below them:
From others he still stands in need of nothing,
Yet upon all depends for food and clothing."

MILTON, *varied.*

I WAS wondering to myself the other day, what would become of those hard-faced, weather-beaten old coachmen, which the railways are daily throwing off the road; and what other occupation those lame, old, rough-headed ostlers could follow; fellows whose legs have been broken and bruised by severe kicks, — who just make their appearance for the moment, until the horses are in readiness, then dart into their dark-looking dwellings, to brush, and rub, and sweat, until another coach rolls up and calls for a fresh supply from their stables. How much are we beholden to these men of the whip and wheel!—these pendulums between city and suburb, carrying the knowing look of the town in their gait, and the bluff farmer in their countenance. One of these old Jehus I saw during my last visit to the country, one who had driven on a line of road for forty years, and during that period through wind, rain, and snow, had averaged nearly eighty miles every day. Sleeping or waking he knew

the road, could tell how many nods a level mile would afford him, and had so well tutored his eyes, that they would open of their own accord at any particular turning or rising of the ground. He had looked in the windows, as he passed, at sire and son, and seen even the latter grow grey with stitching on the same shop-board, or hammering in the same stall; had passed burial and marriage on the road; borne down the bonny bride and brought her home the old lady, with her addition of blooming daughters, just looking as lovely as their mother did, when, thirty years before, she rode beside him. He had seen the comfortable thatched farm-house give place to the new mansion of the lawyer; encountered highwaymen, and conveyed transports; had borne tidings of deaths and births; had a tear for sorrow and a smile with his good news, — loved his horses next to his family; and never refused a poor foot-beaten wayfarer a few miles' ride when his coach was not overladen.

Ten hours a-day had he been accustomed to pass on the box for above forty years; the very air of heaven had become familiar with his face, and the wind that seemed to cut others through, blew around him unregarded. Even one particular stone in the old inn yard, up to which he always drove to within an inch, and on which he always alighted, was worn hollow by his footsteps. Oh, how he hated road-menders! The old holes and deep ruts had a charm for him, and when they were repaired, long custom caused him to slacken the reins, and drive over the spots with the same care as when they were the most dangerous. He swore that the cutting down of a hill had ruined four of his best horses; that it was worse than a change of diet to them, and it took him years before he could fancy to go at full speed over ground where he had been accustomed to walk them slowly. Oh! how he hated the "New Beer Shops,"

the "Tom-and-Jerrys" of the road side! he threw the parcels in at their doorways as if they had been infected with the plague, and put the accustomed fee into his huge pockets without even deigning to throw back a look of thanks; he would never alight to drink there on the hottest day in summer, but travel on if his throat was choked with dust to the old-established road-side inn. Dearly did he love old roads and old customs, and once endangered his own neck by overthrowing the coach, when he had only an old crusty magistrate for a passenger, who had been instrumental in stopping an ancient footpath which led to a village. No money could prevail upon him to carry a passenger for the yellow party at an election; he actually painted his coach blue that it might be a terror to them.

He always wore a crape round his hat when one of his brother whips was dead, and was a long time before he would lift up his elbow (the signal of recognition) to a new hand who came on the road. If he chanced to be the son of an old coachman, then

"He loved him like a very brother.'

He never failed to curse the steamboats when he drove over the bridge; and as to the commencement of the railroad, I believe he wished the earth would open and swallow up all who were engaged on it. He always carried the newspaper in his pocket, which contained accounts of accidents by either steam-boats or railways, and was sure to pass it from one passenger to another; pointing out the identical paragraph which he wished them to read, and returning it to his pocket with a deep-meaning shake of the head. Still he was a kind-hearted man, and there was one old lame ostler on the road, whom he always called Thomas, bid him not to hurry, and never omitted to lend him a hand in harnessing the horses to the coach, — invited him to take a

glass of ale, and always wished him good night. There was an old man, too, who broke stones on the road, and generally had two or three miles to go home, for whom the old Coachman reserved a place, though often at a sacrifice of his own perquisites. Nor could I ever hear of his having received a farthing for conveying a parcel to an old widow woman every week, which was a present of tea and sugar from her daughter, who lived in service at a distant market town. Yes, there was many an eye that beamed kindly, and many a heart that blessed secretly the old Coachman.

What a pleasure it was to sit on the box with him, behind four good horses, before his temper was soured by railways, and when his fine mottled face was made transparent by the light of good humour shining through it. How he would dwell upon the qualities of his steeds; praise the shortness of their backs, the bend of their necks, and, occasionally, jerk the rein to give you a better view of the beauty of one or other of their heads; vowing all the while, that they knew every word he said, and were even then pricking up their ears at his praise! Then, how original were his images! the terms in which he descanted on the peculiar properties for which his horses were valued, being, no doubt, such as had been used by the knowing ones in horse-flesh for centuries. Sometimes he would compare them to men, and say that such a little nag had a heart as proud as a prince, and was as bold and hardy as a general. Then would he point out the resemblance they bore to a lion, in their broad breasts, stiff necks, wild faces, and strong legs. In another he found the qualities of the ox—its broad ribs, short pasterns, large nose, and upright standing. So he would run on, and next comparing them to the fox, he would dilate on their round sides, black legs, short trot, and small heads. Nor could the ass escape him, for like it he would have them small-mouthed, long-reined, and thin-crested.

Lastly, he vowed that a good horse resembled a woman, for it was merry at meat, broad on the forehead, and busy with the tongue. Happy was the old coachman if he could but find a good listener while thus dwelling upon the valuable properties of his horses; he would be sure to give him a greater share of the hammer-cloth, and inquire if he was crammed. Then he could tell how far every country gentleman's estate reached, what hounds he kept, what daughters he had, and what were the dispositions of his sons. He even understood the qualities of crops, and knew almost every acre of bad land. He was familiar with the names of all good landlords, nor had the bad ones escaped his ears. He could tell what innkeeper had the handsomest daughter,—the best liquor,—and gave the best dinners: nay, he would sometimes venture, by a knowing wink, to hint at the familiar terms upon which he and the young hostess stood, and what a marriage he might have made in his younger days; but his vanity was harmless.

Then, how he would stick up for the credit of any old inn where his passengers had stopped to dine, if they complained of the dinner!—taking the blame upon himself for being ten minutes later than his usual time, or any other little "venial" falsehood, to screen the old widow, who had kept the house for nearly forty years. Sometimes he would let a little secret or two out to the passenger who sat on the box with him (if he liked his looks), and say, with a sigh, "Poor old creature! she used to give better dinners; but then sometimes only two or three gentlemen would stay to dine, and she 's often declared to me that she lost money by it. And since that cook-shop 's opened opposite, (I wish it was blown up!) many get off and take dinner there, just to save sixpence. If they are not ready when I am, I leave them behind." The old man was also as

good as an almanack, so familiar had he become with the appearance of the sky. Then had he long stories to tell of heavy snowfalls, axle deep; bitter cold nights and days, when he had no passengers, but was compelled to drive along that dreary road alone. Then he had a thousand anecdotes to wile away the tediousness of the journey, always beginning with "that reminds me of such a one," or, "I knew a man that used to go down to York once a-year,—I've often had him for a passenger,— and although he never spoke to his wife above once a-week when at home, yet when at York he never failed to send her long letters every post." So he ran on, and although his anecdotes were none of the newest, he was so minute as to dates, names, and places, that you were always sure to find something amusing in them. He never called a lawyer a rogue, or a horse-dealer a cheat; but spoke of the one as being very keen, and said that people must have their eyes wide open to deal with the other. He always suspected a man who changed sides at an election; and said a thousand severe things at his expense, such as when he was changing horses, and the hinder one got with the leader, "Nay, nay! come, stick to your party; I'll have no changing sides here." If there had been a wet summer, he was sure to tell his passengers that good hay would fetch a long price, —he was more concerned about his horses than anything beside. He generally hummed a tune to himself at a few particular spots on the road, and was always in the best humour after dinner. He had also more real humanity in his nature than one-twentieth part of those whom he carried up and down; he seldom made a point of looking after any pretty young woman whom he might chance to carry with him, well knowing that she would be well attended to; but if there was a poor old creature whom no one seemed to regard, he would then pull out a good handful of straw from some place

of concealment, strew it under her feet, and, ten to one, throw one of his old coats about her, for he generally had one or two that had done him much service, and he only kept them to sit upon. He would also call for the steps whenever she alighted, and assist her down with his own hand, adding, when she was gone, "We may become old ourselves, and if we don't do a body a good turn, how can we expect to have one done for us?"

Although he was unacquainted with the poets, yet the beauties of nature were not lost upon him. If a skylark "sprung from beside the daisy" and flew singing towards Heaven, the old man would perhaps say, "How I love to hear that bird whistle, sir! it seems to make me feel as lively again." Or should you pass some pretty field near a village where the rustic children were gathering flowers, he would just take his eye from his horses for a moment, and while a smile gradually spread over his face, say with a sigh, "Hey! that puts one in mind of old times, just for all the world like what we used to do ourselves when we were children; but it's no use thinking about these things; is it, sir?" Then he would be serious for a few minutes, unless you chanced to fall in with his humour, and let him see that you had these matters as much at heart as himself. Or should the village bells have been ringing in the distance, and you inquired whence the sound came, he would not only give you the name of the place, but was almost sure to know something about the occasion, and perhaps conclude with some such remark as, "I ought to know the sound of yonder bells,—my eldest son married his wife from there. Yes, I've often heard them ring, and when it's been a death-bell, and I've had no passengers, I've felt very doleful on this lonely road, if it's been dark." These and a thousand such thoughts would the old man utter during the journey, if you endeavoured to make yourself agreeable to him.

Nay, if he took a real liking to you, he would call you "my lad," and unbosom himself to you as much as if you were his own son. If you gave yourself airs, and tried to "ride the high horse," he would be sullen all the journey through, throw the reins into your hand when he alighted without a remark, nor even mutter so much as thanks when you gave him the accustomary half-crown. He liked good company better than money, and would sometimes say, "I've had more pleasant chat with a poor man sometimes, that hasn't had a shilling to call his own, than I have with those stuck-up thing-em-terries as think themselves gentlemen, and make your head ache with talking nonsense."

There was something pleasing in the ease with which he ascended the box,—it was no hurried act: and although a labour to a man of his weight, yet habit had taught him the best method, and he knew to an inch what swing to give himself, and to an hair's breadth where to seat himself. Then what a screen his huge broad body made in either windy or rainy weather — what a sure shelter the poor wight found who sat behind him — what a wall to plant before the ninth part of a man! Many a poor wretch in severe weather has internally thanked Heaven that the old coachman was so fat.

He never swore at his horses, but would give them a "word-of-a-sort" when they did wrong; such as, "Come, Beauty, lay-to, or I must e'en lay on thee; I fear thou'rt like a many more in this world, no better than thou shouldst be: come, come, don't let poor Ball have all the work to do, thou lazy beast. Thou mightst have read the old proverb, 'it's no use whipping the horse that won't draw:' bon thee, thou'rt a bad 'un," and he would give Beauty a smart cut, and speak a word or two of comfort to the other horses.

He had one tale which he told with much relish, and

never let a journey pass without, if he found his passengers growing dull: he also generally reserved it until he came to a bit of level driving, and could now and then avert his head, so that all his audience might catch a word; and thus ran the tale: "I was nationally taken in one night by a chap, while we were staying just to change at the Half-way House. He wanted to go down with me, and I said, says I, there 's no room. Well, a passenger happened to alight for some purpose or another, and somehow I happened to get on the box first, and heard, as I supposed, this gentleman who had alighted, climb up and sing out 'all's right,' and, of course, on I drove. It was then getting dark, and—would you believe it? if I didn't drive this thief of a fellow fifty miles, to whom I told there was no room, and leave the passenger behind who had paid his fare through. Poor fellow! he made his case known to the next coachman who came my road, or else I don't know whatever he would have done. Now, gentlemen, warn't that a dead robbery, and might have admitted of having three actions entered against him? One for bidding me go on, and taking a place when I had a full load; another for detaining a gentleman when he had paid his fare, and creeping into his place by unlawful proxy; and a third, for taking advantage of that gentleman's absence, and it being almost dark; and on a push, a fourth, for being a cheat. I have often argued this matter over with the lawyers and counsellors at an assize time, when I have been taking them down, and one, (a very clever man he was) undertook to make ten actions out against him, and I do assure you he made it all appear as plain as the nose on your face."

Then if any young countryman accosted him familiarly, and mounted the coach to ride only a few miles, what a waggish look the Old Coachman put on, (especially if the young man had donned his church-going suit,) and pass such jokes as "I

reckon this will almost be the last journey, eh John! growing pretty sweet on her, my boy. What! it's only two days ago since I brought Mary down, and thou 'rt going to see if she got home again, I reckon, eh! ah! ah! ha! Well she's a worthy wench, God bless her!" Meantime John would be showing his teeth, and feeling half-pleased, half-ashamed, and at last quite flattered, would only say, "Hey, Jemmy, you're a knowing old bird, and measure everybody's corn by your own strike." Then he would alight at the entrance of a green lane, a spot in which you sighed to spend the summer in, and Mary would be seen at a little distance,—no doubt she had been waiting at the top some time; but thought it "would look as if one was so fond to be seen standing there:" so having heard the coach coming, she had walked back again a few yards, and just contrived to be seen approaching as the coach stopped. "Pretty punctual," said the Old Coachman, to the passenger next him; "great difference between marrying and courting, eh, sir?" Then he would just turn himself to have a peep at them, and perhaps Mary would wave her hand to him, and he would shake his head in reply, then say, "They are a happy couple."

So the old man drives on, respected by all who know him, and with all his prejudices really bearing no ill-feeling towards any one. Long may he live to drive, without any injury from either railways or any other modern improvements. His jolly red face brings nothing but pleasant remembrances before us, the mottled lines thereon remind us of those winding foot-paths and pleasant roads which we have caught glimpses of, or passed over with him: and ere long he will be the only chronicler of road-side houses, pleasant inns, and picturesque villages, where our forefathers were wont to bait on their journey. Never may he be compelled to become guard on a railway! The very sight of those high-piled monotonous banks would kill him; he would miss

the steep hills and deep valleys, and the varied air which he inhaled. The smoke would drive the deep bloom from his cheeks, and the speed the breath from his body. Heaven grant that he may die as he lived, a bluff, honest, good-hearted Old Coachman!

THE OLD FISHERMAN.

"I in these flowery meads would be,
These crystal streams should solace me,
To whose harmonious, babbling noise,
I with my angle would rejoice."

IZAAK WALTON.

BUT few works are fraught with more amusement than some of those ancient Treatises on Angling; there is such a simple cunningness about these fine old fellows that you can scarce refrain from laughing outright while perusing their most serious passages. I doubt not that many of these old-fashioned fishermen had prayers adapted to the different parts of their profession, brief and pious morsels, which they repeated on dropping in their lines, over a bite.

or having landed a huge jack, returned thanks in due form. I have seen an old book in which the angler is recommended "to be full of humble thoughts, not disdaining, when occasion offers, to kneel, lie down, or wet his feet and fingers as often as there is any advantage to be gained thereby." He is also advised to render himself skilful in music, so that whenever his spirits are melancholy, or his thoughts heavy, "he may remove the same with some godly hymn or anthem, of which David gives him ample examples." How religiously these old fellows set about the work of death! I have read somewhere, that Cromwell, in his younger days, was fond of angling. Then the angler is to be strong and valiant, not be amazed at storms, nor frightened at thunder; nor must he, like the fox which preyeth upon the lambs, employ all his labour and cunning on the smaller fry, but like the lion that seizeth elephants, think the greatest fish that swims a reward little enough for the pains he endures. He must also "be patient, not feel vexed when he loses his prey, although it is almost in his hand;—full of love to his neighbour, giving away a portion of what he catches, and not working only for his own belly." He must also be of a thankful nature, "praising the Author of all goodness for the least satisfaction." He ought also to be "a scholar and a good grammarian;" have sweetness of speech to entice others to follow his art; have a knowledge of the sun, moon, and stars; be conversant with wind and weather; and have a constant and settled belief that where the "waters are pleasant and anything likely, there the Creator of all good things hath stored up much of his plenty." In short, an angler must be a good man: and beside having faith enough for heaven, must dedicate great store of it to fishing. Izaak Walton appears to be about the only one who ever lived up to this ancient fisherman's creed.

Angling, after all, is a pleasant pastime; there is a kind of

delicious laziness in the employment, so utterly unlike any other out-of-door amusement. It was one of the few rural sports that I ever cared to follow, but I neither possessed the affection nor the skill of a true angler for the profession; loving it more for the associations it awakened than a regard for the craft itself. It seemed such a pleasure to sit down upon some flowery bank in May, and listen to the river as it went singing to itself, and the sunshine along the shelving shores. You could scarce refrain from singing yourself when you heard the skylark raining down such a shower of music that the sunbeams seemed to throb again beneath the sound, as they quivered along the ripples of the river. Oh, I have jumped up in ecstasy at such sights, and exclaimed, "If this is the earth, where can heaven be!" No, I was no true angler: my rod would lie half-buried amid the daisies, and my float moored beneath the willows that hung over the shore to look at themselves and the sky in the water. I loved it and I loved it not, — but for hours forgot that there was a fin in the river, or a care in the wide world, or aught worth living for but summer and sunshine, trees and flowers, and delicious streams to sit beside and dream about poetry. Then it was so sweet and peaceful to walk home in the twilight, or along with the bright and silent moon, that seemed to keep an equal pace with you across the starry steep of Heaven. Perchance the nightingale sang "somewhere" in the neighbouring covert, and you sat upon some rustic stile to listen to her song; then you lost her sweet notes for a moment, for the waves went sounding over the pebbly shore, and the willows whispered something to each other, until by and by you heard the sound again. But I am wandering from the subject of my present sketch. I have paid Nature many a tribute of my love, but not yet poured out half the feelings of my heart before her.

The village of Warton Woodhouse slopes down to the green banks of the river Trent, the waves of which "kiss the feet of the hills with murmurs," then following a graceful curve, like the neck of a swan, with silvery sweep roll onward to the flowery meadows of Nottinghamshire. Nearly opposite the village, and about midway in the river, stands a small solitary island, called "No-Man's-Land;" it is nearly surrounded with willows, and shows just such rich patches of sedge as Bewick loved to throw into his foregrounds when he sketched a lonely bird. For many years this sequestered island was the residence of an old fisherman; there he erected his hut, laid out his own little plot of garden-ground, and without being visited by either landlord or tax-gatherer, lived like a Crusoe on his lonely isle.

A strange man was Silas Seyton, the old fisherman, and many a terrible tale was told around the hearths at Warton Woodhouse of the deeds which he had done in his younger days, the remembrance of which, it was rumoured, so preyed upon his heart, that he had all but shut himself out from his fellow men. Some said, that he had been a pirate, and was the only one who escaped from a numerous crew, the rest having perished to a man in defending their vessel against a ship of war.

Old Deborah Dunkerley remembered him when he was but a boy,—for he was a native of the village, and, as the old woman said, wild and wayward in his youth as if born to make his parents' hearts ache. Not a boat could be moored at the foot of the village if Silas Seyton knew of it, for he would leap in and row away far up the river, beyond the shouts and threats of those who stood waiting his return, and were compelled to wait, unless they could borrow another boat and give him chase. A good ducking had no terrors for him, for if thrown out into the midst of the river, he would swim to the shore with as much ease

as a water-hen. As to beating him, Deborah Dunkerly declared that he was turned out of the school before he was ten years old, for no beating could call either a tear to his eye or a word of penitence to his lips. Happy was Silas when a boy if he could but kick off his shoes and run among the snow in winter, or in summer throw his garment upon some green bank, and stand fishing up to the arms in the Trent; he was a perfect water-rat,— a very terror to the denizens of Warton Woodhouse, but the cherished idol of his father and mother.

Poor Silas! his boyish pastimes at his native place soon came to an end; he found greater store of the finny tribe in Squire Somerby's fish-pond than the Trent. He was caught by the old Squire, who uttered many a threat, the least of which he never could have reconciled his honest heart to execute. He was also reproved by his father, who was gardener to the Squire. For two days Silas was moody and thoughtful; he visited all his old haunts, swam over to the isle, and went round to examine the various nests he had discovered that spring; climbed the elm trees where the rooks had for ages built, went and sat alone in the moonlight on his little sister's grave, climbed up to the window and peeped inside the old church, lingered before the village school, and brought home a wild rose which he planted under the cottage window. The next morning he was gone!

Deborah Dunkerley was then a young woman, and in the service of the Squire at the hall; she remembered the morning that Silas first left the village. His little box, which contained his church-going suit, was standing empty in the midst of the floor, when Deborah entered; he had taken all his clothes, and his poor mother sat weeping in a low rocking-chair, the very chair in which she had a thousand times rocked Silas to sleep when he was a baby,— where

she had a thousand times kissed his little lips, and blessed his dark bright eyes. She held a bit of soiled paper between her trembling fingers—it was wet with tears—she handed it to Deborah, and on it was written:

"Weep not, my dear Mother and Father! I am gone to sea. I shall come back a better lad, and ask Squire Somerby's pardon for fishing in his pond. Every night I shall say my prayers, for I know then you will be praying for me before you go to bed."

Ten years glided away, and no tidings came of Silas Seyton. On the eleventh summer, one evening in June, just as the setting sun was gilding the top of the wood above the village, a boat was moored on the Trent-bank, and a tall young man, with a countenance browned by sun and wind, stepped ashore, and walked up to the cottage where Samuel and Mary Seyton once dwelt. He leaned on the ruined palings, he fixed his eyes on the grey and weather-beaten grass which had grown upon the threshold; he undid the dilapidated gate, and sat with folded arms upon the weeds under the wild-rose tree, which then grew high above the broken window. Several of the villagers stopped to look at him, but no one spoke a word, and he never once lifted up his eyes to gaze upon their faces. All at once he sprung up, and hurried into the churchyard; his lip was observed to quiver as he gazed upon two green hillocks, which stood on either side the grave of the sister of Silas Seyton; he shed no tear, though his lips were seen suddenly to become dry and of a deadly hue. He hurried back to his boat; several children were then playing in it, he lifted them out, gently stroking their little heads, threw a handful of silver among them on the shore, and rowed away.

Nearly thirty years had passed away since that young sailor

set foot upon the green bank which sloped down to the Trent. The children who then so eagerly scrambled for the handful of silver which he threw amongst them had grown up to be thoughtful men and women, and their own children had many a time played upon the same bank where they stood and huzzaed after the young sailor as he rowed away in silence. Many a gravestone had been added since that day to those which stood in the churchyard of Warton Woodhouse. Those "Sacred to the Memory of Samuel and Mary Seyton" were scarcely legible; they were overgrown with short green moss and lichens. The cottage in which Silas was born had long since gone to decay, not even a vestige of the little garden was to be seen; a large farm-house had been built upon the spot; there were but few living who could tell the history of the humble pair who once dwelt there.

Time had left the deep imprint of his footsteps upon the village; he had wreathed the old church with the "garland of eternity;" the green ivy had overrun its grey walls. The few who had danced with Samuel Seyton round the May-pole, then went hobbling with a stick, or if they chanced to meet with one who remembered the by-gone days, they would plant their backs against some paling in the sunshine, and talk over the changes which had taken place since they were young. Old Squire Somerby had long slept in the large vault under the huge sarcophagus, with its Latin mementos. The fish-pond where Silas had hooked the large pike, was filled in and added to the hall garden; trees had grown upon the spot, birds had built and reared their young there. The fair daughters of the ancient race of the Somerbys had gathered roses where once the roach showed its red fins; they had played at "hide-and-seek" in the new shrubbery; been married, and some of them had died.

Many a voice that had welcomed "Harvest Home," hail-

ed the sheep-shearing supper, trolled a merry stave at the feast of Warton Woodhouse, cracked a joke at Whitsuntide, and joined in a Christmas carol, was then mute, and tiny hands had gathered the daisies upon their graves. Youth had grown old, beauty had become haggard and wrinkled; locks which had hung in clusters of brown, black, or auburn, had turned grey, and were tucked under a plain old cap, as if unfit to be seen. Many a jovial face, that was wont to catch the gleam of the ruddy fire at the old Blue Bell, to look thoughtful for a moment, while they listened to Samuel Seyton on a Saturday night, when over their cups of ale he was wont to talk of Silas, — was missed from the "accustomed place;" a new race were seated there; children, who were wont to lead their fathers home, or come for the customary Saturday's halfpenny, were then led home by their own children. The old schoolmistress had died; the —— But why linger over Deborah Dunkerley's narrative?—forty years had gone by since first Silas Seyton went to sea.

But few knew him when he returned again, his face was so brown and battered by wind and wave, looking like the hardy bark of the oak which has braved a thousand tempests. His voice was also deep, loud, and forbidding, and his whole appearance had a sternness about it more calculated to damp any approach to familiarity than to encourage it. How he came back or from whence he came, no one knew; he landed not at the village, but rowed up to the lonely island in the night; only one person saw him return. Next morning his boat was seen rocking in the eddies that broke upon the island, and a tent had been erected thereon, a blue column of smoke also curled above the tops of the osiers, but no living soul was seen. On the third night he rowed to the village and found out old Deborah, and through her procured what were needful to build his hut and supply his

other wants. It was the harbour he had selected to moor himself in after all his toil, to shelter his old hull after all the tempests it had encountered. Old Deborah was his go-between, the only link that connected him with the world! She sold his fish, or exchanged it for other food. Silas rarely spoke to any other than herself, or set his foot upon another's threshold.

He had lived on that lonely island several years when I first became acquainted with him: it was on a summer's evening I had rowed down in an old boat and landed there to spend an hour angling or reading, just as fancy chose. I was but a boy. Patience was worn out, and nothing caught. But what matters it? we became friends; he loved to tell his wild sea tales, and in me found an eager listener. He was not the surly man some thought him; he had, however, his dark moods,—times when he walked to and fro before the hut with his brows bent and his arms folded, and a rock in his gait; no doubt the very motion with which he walked the deck at sea. A cloudy day, with the wind blowing aloud, and the waves dashing upon his little island shore, seemed to inspire him, and he would pace along before the hut, his iron-grey locks streaming from under his red cap, while he dwelt upon battle and dangerous scenes of wreck and carnage which were done on the solitudes of the sea. I used to look upon him with veneration, and marvel how one who had lived amid storm and strife so many years could at last rest tranquilly upon that lonely island. But he had often the holy volume upon his knee, and would sit on the rude bench before his door in the sunshine of the Sabbath, pondering over its sublime truths, while from its pages he gathered peace. Pleasant were those hours — some village bell, perchance

> "Over the wide water'd shore,
> Swinging slow with solemn roar—"

told that hundreds were then wending their way over flowery fields, and through the still green lanes, and like one family were about to kneel before the Great Giver of all good. At such times his eyes would wander from the sacred volume and dwell upon the outstretched landscape, where rolled the wide spreading river, and the village sloped down its sweet declivity, until the tear stole unawares down his bronzed cheek, and fell upon the pages on which all his hopes were anchored. Those who watched his countenance might trace the varied emotions which flowed through his soul, might see when his mind was wandering amid scenes of former strife, or when it centered homeward, like a bird struggling through the storm, which at last plunges into its own nest.

Years of peril and danger had passed away, and still that wish had clung to him, through all that he had passed, to lay his bones near the place of his birth ; he still had hopes

> ——————" His latest hours to crown,
> Amid those humble bowers to lay him down.
> To husband out life's taper at the close,
> And keep the flame from wasting by repose.
> * * * * * * * *
> Around his fire an evening group to draw,
> And tell of all he felt and all he saw ;
> And, as a hare, whom hounds and horns pursue,
> Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
> He still had hopes, his long vexations past,
> There to return, and die at home at last."
>
> *Goldsmith's Deserted Village.*

Few are the spots which I have seen so well adapted to bring repose to a heart outwearied with the tear and tumult of the world as that on which the old fisherman had taken up his home. There his boat was moored beside the sedge, the waters welling around her with a sound of peace, a

drowsy babbling that even added to the reigning repose. The lowing of the distant cattle came subdued over the water, while the tall willows, ever and anon, made a silvery shiver with their white leaves; then again all was still. Sometimes a distant sail would be seen beyond the bend of the river, just moving along the green banks like a cloud, then hid by the tall trees which bent over the waters. And well did he love to row his boat by night, when all around was silent, and another sky seemed sleeping in the river; it was then that he became eloquent, uttered words of religious truth, or told one of his "hair-breadth perils;" a battle, a chase, or a wreck, just as his memory suggested. Great pains, too, did he bestow to instruct me in the gentle art; wishing, perhaps, that when he was dead, I might inhabit his lonely hut, and follow the same occupation. But I was unskilful with hooks, baits, and nets, and had no ambition to sleep in that old hammock, which in the daytime was hoisted to the very roof of his hut. Then, how he would descant upon a fisher's life, and moralize on the finny tribe, until one could scarcely credit that the same voice had often rung above the storm, been foremost to shout in battle, and that those very hands had grasped the cutlass to board an enemy, and led the way over decks slippery with blood! Such things however had once been, although to attempt a description of them is beyond my power; such a sketch must be filled up by an abler hand than mine.

But the old man has long been dead, and is buried on the lone island, a meet resting place for one whose chief days had been spent on the great deep. The shrill plover shrieks above his narrow bed, and the rustling willows and rank sedge wave and whisper in the moonlight around his silent resting place, while the waters roll with a mournful cadence along the shore. Not a vestige of his hut remains; his boat

was sold to defray the expenses of his burial; wealth he had none. All he had done and suffered will never be known; he had been shipwrecked, shed his blood in battle, loved, "not wisely but too well," and died. What I have adventured here is but a hasty sketch; what I have heard him recount would more than fill this volume—his adventures would require a second "Tom Cringle" to record them,—it would be a task which I dare not attempt,—the green hills and old woods have been my home, but not

"The broad blue sea."

TUMBLING TOMMY.

A nimble rascal and a dapper,
Full deftly could he cut and caper,
Dance, run, and leap, frisk and curvet,
Tumble and do the somerset;
A nimble, witty knave, I warrant,
And one that well could say his errant.

Virgil Travestie.

In running over the various fortunes of my playmates, I had entirely forgotten my old acquaintance little Tommy Parkins, until chance threw him in my way a few weeks ago, and under such circumstances as I should never again have recognised him, had not his own invention hit upon an old trick which left me no doubt of his identity. Never did tranquil hamlet rear a wilder scape-grace than little Tommy, or village green bear a more arrant skip-Jack; his legs, instead of his thoughts, were ever turned heaven-ward; to him the world was always topsy-turvy, for never was he so happy as when tumbling head over heels, turning somersets, standing on his head upon a pint pot, or walking upon his hands. He was, indeed, a thing of "shreds and patches," a very Joseph in his garments of divers colours; every somerset he turned cost his mother a score or two of stitches; she did but little beside mending his clothes, or running from cottage to cottage begging bits of cloth.

"Do, neighbour," she would say, "try to find me a bit

of something to mend our lad's breeches, for really it takes all my time only to keep him decent; I 've hardly laid down my needle, and told him not to split his things so again, before up go his legs over and over, like a windmill-sail, and crack, crack, crack, crack, goes all my stitching, though I 've done it with white-a-brown thread of three thicknesses."

Poor Tommy's tumbling was his only pleasure, as he confessed, " he did it without a thought;" he could assign no more reason for it than a bird can for throwing open its wings and flying from tree to tree. He went to school, but, poor fellow! he never could have lived had he not been permitted to go out every hour to give his heels an airing; they absolutely quivered again when the hands of the clock were upon the point of twelve or five. How wistfully would he look at the flies, running feet uppermost on the ceiling! I believe from my heart, he envied them during school hours. But, oh! when the school broke loose, when the hour was up, the signal given, the words uttered, " Boys, you may go home," to have seen Tommy shoot out! —hop—step—jump, and he had cleared the threshold, and helter-skelter, head over heels he went, never stopping to look; and as to thinking, why, his very brains were prevented from dwelling upon anything for even a moment, so he trusted to some hedge, ditch, wall, or paling to bring him up; nor would his feet remain easy even then, but hang uppermost, and knock and kick, and perhaps take it into their *heads* to go over and over back again. No marvel that he almost always held his book wrong end uppermost, and was fond of making X's, because they were all legs; if he looked at a picture, he invariably turned it heels upwards, then marvelled why the legs were not pointed skyward; how his face was plashed in wet weather, when he walked home, head downwards, on his hands, to keep his

shoes clean and not dirty his mother's floor. He believed that man originally walked on his head, and averred, that not half the people would fall in frosty weather, if they looked to their steps and took heed to their ways.

In vain did his mother inquire, "What can I do with him?" Who would undertake to teach him a trade? He never could settle down into a sober body, unless he enlisted for a soldier, and had the good fortune to lose those whirligig legs,—those spinning spindles. However, he left the school, and poor old tailor Markam, having a respect for his mother, said, to use his own expression, "I'll try what sitting cross-legged with a heavy sleeve-board and a heavier goose will do for him; for if aught in the world will take the devil out of them legs of his, it mun be a little heavy ironing on his own knees."

So Tommy went on trial to tailor Markam, and when asked if he could sit cross-legged, he only replied with a grin, and throwing his feet over each shoulder, made them meet behind his neck. Fine fun to him was the goose and sleeve-board!—he brought the iron down every time with a force which made the shopboard on which they sat spring again; the old tailor praised his exertion, and Tommy ironed away until the perspiration streamed from his brow. Unfortunately, however, the shopboard was thin—it was elastic—down went the iron in an instant as soon as he made this discovery; he chattered away like a monkey, swayed himself a few times, until the tailor shook in his seat. There was no resisting the emotion; a fine clear board with such a spring, and not to tumble,—that was more than the legs of a human being like him could resist —so down went the sleeve-board and goose, and up went his heels, and alighted on poor old Markam's chest, and pitched him topsy-turvy into the floor, and as the window was up, out he shot at a bound, and went tumbling all

the way home, to the amazement of his poor old mother, and the disappointment of all her hopes.

No; tailoring would not suit Tommy, especially if followed on a board elastic as old Markam's; so he was once more at "a loose end," emptying his mother's cupboard, then somersetting round the village-green to get a new appetite. In vain did the old woman plead with the glazier, and entreat him to give her boy a trial; but his look was decisive; he pointed to the piles of glass which stood around his shop, shrugged up his shoulders and shook his head, saying plainly, that amid such brittle ware there was not room for Tumbling Tommy.

Our host at the Blue Bell gave him a trial, but it was of no avail, for if he had to carry home a pint of beer, he set it down twenty times during the journey to show the boys how he could stand on his head on the full pot; too often reaching the doors of his customers with the ale foam glittering on his elfin locks, or sometimes, forgetting himself, he ventured a somerset with a full pot in each hand making a circle round his head like a water-wheel.

In vain did his mother inquire, "What ever am I to do with him?—Yonder he is, eating me out of house and harbour, and making himself neither better nor worse nor a teetotum. I'm sure I should be thankful if they would stick them shammocks (legs) of his in the stocks for a month or two, for never had lone woman such a plague in a bairn in this world. Wet weather or dry, up goes his heels; no matter if one happens to have one's washing hung out to dry, it 's all the same; only the other day there was the marks of his great hammocks (feet) on parson Preedon's surplice, after it had been bleached as white as a lily. As to hanging anything up in the house out of reach of his feet, Heaven bless you! I'm forced to stand upon the table, or down they come, with his whirl-a-gigging. Bird and

cage, all my strings of onions, saucepan-lids, and candlesticks,—bless you! he used to bring 'em down wi' such a clatter, it were enough to deafen the dead. What ever I 'm to do with him, Heaven only knows!"

The shopkeeper gave him a day's trial, but before night he had both his feet in a hamper of eggs, and was glad to make his escape from the wrath of his master, without pausing to draw out the shoe which stuck in a firkin of butter after one of his somersets. He finished with the old shoemaker, who took him on trial before noon, by sweeping half the crockery ware from the mantel-piece, and driving his feet through two panes of glass at the very first tumble. With the barber he fared no better; and before he had been with the blacksmith an hour, his feet were over the bellows' handle, and up and down he jerked at such a rate as blew every spark out of the forge, and made an illumination all over the floor. Poor Tommy! had he lived in the dark ages, those legs of his would assuredly have been exorcised, and every means taken to rid them of the restless demons by which they would have been deemed possessed. The neighbours advised his mother to tie an immense log to his heels, like those which are used for keeping within bounds runaway colts; but Fate had other things in store for Tumbling Tommy.

The mountebanks had come to try their fortune at Warton Woodhouse, and had got up a lottery, the highest prize being two guineas in money; the lowest were stated to be worth five shillings: shares one shilling each—tumbling and conjuring gratis. All day long they went drumming and sounding through the village, and having also distributed their bills through the neighbouring hamlets, a vast concourse (for a country place) were soon assembled. A rare show did those mountebanks make around the little circus set apart

for their performance; never were so many gown-pieces, cotton shawls, silk handkerchiefs, kettles, boots, shoes, hats, etc. before exhibited in the village; every one who had a shilling to spare tried his luck, and some of them, to use my old grandad's phrase, who had "more money than brains," purchased three or four shares. Well, the prizes were drawn by a peasant lad, well known to them all, and I doubt not as fairly as is customary on such occasions; in short, everybody seemed satisfied who had won a prize, and those who had not murmured; the two guineas were, however, won by one of our neediest neighbours, whom, I believe, my grandad furnished with the shilling to try his luck. When the prize-drawing was all over, the performance commenced, and you may be sure that Tommy was there as a looker on. The principal tumbler chanced to be a very stout man, considerably too much so for his profession; however, he managed to turn a somerset,—he tried a second, and fell down. Oh! to have seen Tumbling Tommy at that moment! He jumped, he screamed, he clapped his hands with delight, and shouted aloud, "Ha! ha! I can beat him, I can beat him!" The stout man again arose, and Tommy stood peeping between the legs of a very tall man, and watched his motions with the deepest anxiety. The mountebank made another trial, and accomplished it slowly and clumsily, and then by way of change stood on his head. This was more than our mercurial friend could bear to witness: to stand on his head only: why, Tommy could do that before he was four years old. Like a greyhound slipped from the leash when the game is in view, so did Tommy shoot from under the legs of his tall companion, and, without once halting, made half a score somersets in the circus. The fat man brought himself to an anchor, and sat looking daggers at the intruder; the crowd clapped their hands and shouted, — even those who had drawn blanks joined in the applause. Nor could

the master-mountebank keep back his share of praise; the whole circus rang with loud acclaim — a proud night was that for Tumbling Tommy. The performance was at last finished, and next day the mountebank sought out the mother of the young scape-grace: he made very fair offers for her son, and held out hopes that if he went through a regular course of tuition, there would be no doubt of his one day becoming a great tumbler. "No, she couldn't think of letting her bairn live such a tramping life; if he tumbled a bit now and then to please himself, that was all well and good. But he was her own bairn, and as dear to her as if he was ever so steady; no, she couldn't think of letting him leave her." A day or two however elapsed, and Tumbling Tommy was missing; where he had gone we all had a shrewd guess; but years elapsed and his mother never saw him again, although he frequently sent her small sums of money, and, at last, more than she required to live on.

Time rolled away, and I had almost forgotten my old playmate; if I thought of him at all, it was among many others, a mingled mass in which few of the objects stood out distinctly. One day, however, a strange foreign-looking fellow knocked at the door, and looking very hard at me said, "Don't you know me?" No, I had no remembrance of that mustachoed, be-whiskered, and sun-browned face — I had not the honour to know the gentleman. He drew a card from his case and presented it. "Signior Capriccio, Padua." Worse and worse; I had no acquaintance with any such person, never remembered to have seen such a name before. What could he mean? There was a sly mockery in his countenance as he exclaimed, "I'll make you know me!" and throwing up his heels, he turned three or four somersets, nor ceased until he had poked one foot clean through a map of London, making a greater hole in the Thames than ever the tunnel had done, and demolishing both St. Paul's and the

Bank, and the whole neighbourhood of Cheapside. I knew him instantly, not by his face, but his feet; there was no mistaking those old familiar legs — they looked all the better for wear: had he but presented them instead of his face at first, I should at once have recognised my old friend Tumbling Tommy. Those very legs which were so despised, which every neighbour prophesied would be his ruin, had carried him safely through a great portion of the world. Dons, and grandees, and monsieurs, and mademoiselles had showered down their plaudits upon them; they had procured him a new name, had acquired a thousand foreign tricks, and won for their owner good store of gold. From the day he joined the mountebanks, his whole life had been one series of fortunate events — he only tumbled to rise the higher, keeping no doubt in mind that line of old Bunyan's—

"He that is down needs fear no fall."

MARY GRAY.

Fear no more the lightning flash,
  Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
Fear not slander, censure rash ;
  Thou hast finished joy and moan :
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE story I am about to relate is one of almost every-day occurrence ; a simple tale of one who was young and beautiful, and loved, and died. Every town, every village, nay, almost every street of any extent could furnish materials for such a story as I am about to tell. A thousand heads are now tossing on uneasy pillows, beset with painful thoughts that chase away all rest ; a thousand hearts are aching and breaking in silent chambers, the story of whose griefs will never be uttered. The grave will close over all their sor-

rows, the sun will rise and set, moonlight and darkness will chase each other over their "narrow homes," thousands will pause to peruse the "uncouth rhymes," on their rude head-stones, but not a tongue can record their sufferings.

How many faces do we pass daily on which grief has imprinted her image! How many sighs are heaved hourly, fraught with love and pity, and painful remembrances, and hopes, and prospects blighted, that die on the weary air! How many beautiful homesteads do we pass standing in lovely spots, on hill, or valley, or flowery lawn, decorated by the master-hand of nature! spots so sweet that we might deem that death came not there —yet even while we are gazing, perchance there are hearts breaking within.

I had been absent several months from the village when I took the advantage of a fine day in June to revisit it, and to have a little gossip with a few of my old acquaintance. As I wandered along over the fair meadows that stretch beside the river Trent, the slow solemn tones of a death-bell smote my ear, and came with a strange sound, amid all the beauty and sunshine of that sweet summer scene. I entered the first cottage in the village, and was not long before I had gathered some particulars of the story of the deceased, which to me was very interesting, through having seen her before. But I will attempt to give a portion of our conversation, for in a tale of the heart, the simplicity and earnestness of an old woman outdoes all author-craft.

"And how old might she be, Betty?" inquired I, tasting of the old woman's home-brewed beer, for no greater offence can you offer them, after a long absence, than to refuse taking refreshment.

"Nineteen next reaping time; — try a bit of that kissing crust," added she, taking as much interest in my wants as I did in her narrative; "I am afeard that loaf's rather too high baked; bon that Lucy, I left her to mind them on th'

hearth, while I went down to Sally Penny's to talk about poor Mary Gray. But everybody loved her; it would have done your heart good to see how the children used to run after her, and scream and cry to go to her. Ay, the very crossest used to be as still as mice if she only took them, and would snuzzle to her, or look up into her sweet face, and seem a deal more pleased with gazing on it than they would have been with all the playthings you could have brought 'em fra a fair."

"So you believe the young squire loved her?" continued I, occasionally swallowing a mouthful of bread and cheese just to keep the old woman in humour, and prevent her importuning me and interrupting the story.

"Loved her!" echoed the old woman, as if indignant at my daring to doubt it for a moment. "Loved her! an angel fra heaven would have loved her! she was such a sweet temper, and so gentle, and so pretty;—I often said she was too good for this sinful world. Yes, Henry did love her with all his heart; none of your fly-by-sky love was his, but such love as they loved with in those old-fashioned times when they used to die for one another if they couldn't be made happy. But his father was a rogue,—it will come home by him, though, for both their sakes; this year, they say, all his corn looks very sickly, and only the other day he had a cow and calf died;—bless you, he'll never prosper. Do you know he threatened to turn Henry out-of-doors if he ever saw Mary again, and to disinherit him, and all for loving her. But his uncle said he shouldn't want, and he bought Henry a something in the army—I forget what they call it, it's something like missionary;—however it made him a fine officer, and he went to join his regiment, but the thoughts of leaving Mary preyed so upon his heart, that together with thinking of her, and being in a low way, through what his father had said, why, poor dear young man, he died." And

the old woman applied the corner of her checked apron to her eyes, for they were overflowing with tears.

"What then?" said I, after having sat for several minutes in silence.

"There was nothing then," replied the old woman, "nothing but for her to die also, and yet it 's a marvel how long she bore up. The news of Henry's death came one Sunday. Mary, as usual, had been to church; but it was noticed by many that she never sang that morning; I believe she felt a foreboding that something was about to happen,—I have myself, aforetime, had a kind of doley feeling,—one sighs and goes moping about here and there like an ill-sitting hen. But, as I was saying, when she came home from church there was a letter for her. Old John Key,—you know the old man that brings all our letters from Gainsborough,—well, he brought it on Saturday night, but as it was sealed with black, and he'd half a suspicion from where it came, he thought, as he said, he would let her go to church first, as a blessed discourse often makes one bear troubles much better than we could without; to the good it 's what a dram is to dram-drinkers. Well, as I was saying, Mary came in,—I happened to be there; her mother had had a pain in her side, so she had sent to me for a little of my syrup of gillyflowers. Poor girl! she never spoke; she looked at her mother, then at the letter;—you know how she used to look with those large soft eyes of hers;—poor thing! it seemed as if she knew what there was in the letter; then she turned pale as a snow-drop, and her hands trembled like silk-grass: she went up stairs without speaking. She hadn't been there above a minute or two before she fell on the floor—she gave a deep groan—only one: it was loud enough to break her poor heart clean in two. There she lay quite senseless; we were a long while bringing her to herself again; the letter was in her hand; I just caught a gleg at it—it was written crooked,

as if a person's hand had trembled a very deal while writing it; it wasn't at all like what Sloppy-kicky Briggs used to set our Jack for a copy at school, — I could remember all there was in the letter, and part of another which came with it from the Colonel."

"And how did she bear all this?" inquired I, wishing to reach the end of her story.

"She couldn't bear it," replied the old dame; "it was over much for her—the weight crushed her; from that day I never saw her smile again. She always spoke kind to everybody though, but we all knew she was going fast; her eyes grew dim, they had lost all that sparkling which they once had, and her cheeks became paler and paler every day.

"Then she took to wandering about like a ghost, and seemed to like nothing so much as going all alone to still and melancholy places, among dark trees and gloomy out-of-the-way spots. But at last she seemed to settle down to one place, and that was under the large old oak that grows by the wood-side: there she would sit a long day through with her eyes bent upon the little stream that runs along the wood. Marry, it was enough to turn a body's brain to sit there listening to that watter as it went wabbling and gabbling over the stones! Poor dear soul! she's made many a heart ache when they've been going past to see her sit there, so young, and so pretty, and so innocent, all doley by herself, looking upon the stream. But thank God she's an angel in heaven now, sitting beside her own dear Henry."

"Is it long since," said I, "that she first heard the tidings of his death?"

"Twelve moons and aboon," replied the old gossip: "we all wondered that she held up so long, but the green summer fell softly upon her, for she would seldom keep at home, and the blessed sun and air are marvellous physicians, worth a million of your fine doctors, that get money by talking pig-

Greek and dog-Latin, and nipping a body's arm, and taking snuff. But, as I told you, her complaint laid in her heart; she seemed to be going just like one of my big white lilies did last summer,—the worms had eaten into the root, and although it looked pretty to the last, yet I saw it was dwindling away. Nay, when autumn came, and the harvest was got in, she still went out: I've seen her sit there when the wind and rain have been beating in her sweet face, and the dead leaves have fallen upon her silky hair; but she took no notice of these things — the very birds would come and hop and peck so close to her that she might have got hold of them by only putting out her hand, but they seemed to know that she would do them no harm. When winter came she began to pine away, and talked a deal about the woods, and fields, and the flowers. It would have made your heart bleed only to have heard what remarks she made; sometimes she talked so pretty, ay! just for all the world like that poetry which one reads in printed books."

"And did she still retain her senses amid all her sorrows?" inquired I.

"Her senses! ay, marry did she," replied the old woman; "but she seemed so altered, so different somehow—not that she talked like those who learn to speak fine through going to school—a lot of your kick-shaw boarding-school misses, coming home with their ma's and pa's, as if fayther and mother wasn't better English,—no, it was none of this sort of fine talk, but what she said somehow used to get into your heart, quite unawares like; not that it was so grand, but her words were like—I can't tell you what,—but you cried at hearing 'em, and you felt as if you could listen for ever and ever. At times this spring, happen some of her young companions would bring her a few snow-drops, which they had gathered in Eldon-valley, or a few primroses plucked on the sunny side o' the wood, or mayhap a few violets

pulled in some green lane or other; and then to hear what questions she would put, and what she would say about them few flowers! and Christ's sarmon on the Mount, and Harvey's Meditations, and the Book of Job, and bits of David's Psalms, and sometimes Shakspeare and Milton, I think she called them; but for my part I shouldn't have known but that she had taken it all from the Bible, if I hadn't heard her tell their names, it seemed so grand. But, bless me, I must have tired you with talking so long, and I promised to be at the *berrin'*, and it only wants half an hour. You'll go down and see her before she's screwed up in her coffin? I'm sure when you look at her you'll think she 's only asleep, she 's so little altered."

Such was the narrative of poor old Betty Whitterton, who is now herself resting in that rural church-yard, scarcely two strides from the grave of her favourite. She speedily donned her black hood, and having hung up the key behind the window-shutter, " that Jackey might find it if he should come home before she had left the berrin'," (funeral,) we set out together to the " house of mourning."

What a solemn hush steals over the heart while we are seated beside the silent dead, looking on the very face which like a stream of sunshine made light and gladness wherever it moved! What a holy awe reigns around when the beam of beauty is quenched,—settled into sadness like the slumbering blackness of the sky, hopeless, and dark, and still—the deep lull of dead despair! The agony of hope is passed, the pang of prayer is no more—Sorrow is weary of watching, and Grief throws herself down to weep, — even Pain falls prostrate, and listens to his own sobs as they gradually sink into the long, deep, intervening sigh. The fountain of tears has become dry, the blood flows coldly in its channel, passion is dead, and no feeling is left in the bosom but stagnant grief. All seem troubled but the tranquil dead.

How still was everything within that cottage! The grief of the mourners seemed hushed, as if the voice of Sorrow was too sacred to be heard above the beating of its own heart. The very sound of the clock seemed irreverently loud; yet, slow and solemn, it somehow partook of the pervading awe of Death. A few flowers stood in a pot by the window, but they were all withered and dying; even her favourite throstle stood moping upon his perch, as if he had missed the fair form that attended to his wants. Her gipsy bonnet hung behind the door, and two or three wild-roses, which doubtless her own hands had stuck in it, still remained dry and dead. The window-blind was down, and a solemn shadow settled upon an old landscape which hung against the wall, a cloudy dulness shrouded its sunny summits;—you felt that sunshine had no right to intrude there, nor aught save melancholy to move in that gloomy ante-room of the grave.

"This then is death," thought I, placing my hand upon her smooth cold forehead, colder than the whitest marble.—"The sunshine is streaming upon the fields and woods, and she, a thing of beauty, looks more ready to leap up and sport amid the bright valleys, among sweet flowers, than be borne to the darksome grave. No more will her merry laughter be heard at even-tide ringing through the village street,—that sweet voice will never again chaunt the simple songs which made the hearts of those who listened to them thrill again, beneath her utterance." I could have called death "harsh names" while gazing upon that fair face, and thought that the grave might have been contented to close upon one less lovely.

The village undertaker at length arrived, and all, saving the weeping mother, arose to look upon the face of the dead for the last time. The blessed light of heaven would never more fall upon that fair face,—no human eye would behold its loveliness again! Oh! she was beautiful even in death:—the choicest summer-flowers adorned her shroud, and you might

fancy, while gazing upon her, that she had lain down to rest a while upon a bed of flowers, and would awake anon: she seemed too lovely to belong to death; you could not imagine that a countenance on which so sweet a smile was chiselled was aught akin to the tomb. Her thin pale lips were slightly apart, and while you gazed, seemed as if they were about to say, "I am too young and fair to die:" each curled its wan crimson apart as if they were again waiting for that sweet music over which they had so long kept watch. Her bright brown hair was divided in the centre of her clear smooth brow, and fell in glossy clusters down the unsullied snow of her neck, here and there mingling their ringlets amid the flowers. Just then the door was suddenly opened, and the light breeze stole over the pale features of the dead, and a straggling lock was uplifted for a moment, then fell again upon the still blossoms. The arched eyebrows stood like bended stems spanning a stream of darkness; the blue of heaven, which they had so long overlooked, had vanished—the stars were dimmed, the cloudy lids had closed for ever. A white rose had been placed in her wan hand, but had fallen upon her wrist, as if it had lain down to die beside one so lovely. A few flowers had fallen around her face, and were impearled with the tears of the mourners. You could have fancied that they wept, and that their bright heads were bowed down by sorrow. A miniature of her lover rested upon her breast.

Just before the lid of the coffin was replaced a sunbeam streamed in through an aperture of the door, and fell full upon the face of the departed, giving to it for a moment the appearance of a halo of glory, a beauty that belonged only to Heaven. At length the greedy screws clenched their iron teeth upon the dead, with a strange crunching sound that sank into the heart, causing a momentary shiver to run through every frame. The coffin was borne down the little

garden, over the threshold where she had so often stepped in childhood, beyond the flowers which her own hands had planted: no one turned to look upon the woodbine which she had trained to run up to her chamber window; they bore her past the summer-house where she had so often sat with Henry, and where her young tongue was wont in the cool evenings to make music of the holy poetry of the Bible, and send a soft hush of sacred thoughts to the heart of her mother, which fell subdued and gentle upon herself.

The coffin was borne along by six village maidens; they were robed in spotless white, and each on her bosom wore a white rose; the pall was of the same hue. The procession moved slowly along through a green lane; scarcely a footstep was heard to press the long grass; every sound seemed muffled, every voice was hushed; the tears gushed forth in silence—the still utterance of grief. We passed by the old wood, by the oak where she had so often sat; the brook still gurgled along its pebbly path, but on my ears it rang with a low melancholy wail, as if it also mourned for the dead. I glanced for a moment on the spot where she was wont to sit; I saw her shadow in the water; her drapery was mingled with the foliage of the old tree; I closed my eyes to shut out the fancy.

The forest wore a sad appearance—the trees looked darker than usual—and when the boughs waved, they sent forth a strange sullen sound. A slight shower had fallen in the early part of the day—a few drops yet hung upon the leaves—and as they fell around us, shaken by the wind, I could almost fancy that they wept. We entered a straggling street in the village—every door was opened as we passed; both old and young shed tears, and many a lip moved as if in prayer; some fell in with the procession. Above a tuft of aged elms rose the spire of the church; and as I lifted up my head to admire its fair proportions, resting against the clear

sky, the deep bell rung out a long measured sound, that echoed far and wide over the neighbouring valleys. I ventured to raise my eyes on those around me; every cheek was pale!—even the faces of the fair bearers were as white as the garments they wore. That sound had driven the colour from many a lovely cheek; still it boomed on through the still air, like the voice of Death calling upon us to approach. We entered the church; the coffin was placed in the aisle—that aisle up which her light foot had so often trod. The pew-door stood open; the cushion on which she used to sit had fallen upon the floor. It was pointed out to me as Mary's seat, and I entered alone. A Prayer book rested on the oaken ledge—I took it up; it fell open and revealed a fly leaf, on which was written, "The Gift of Henry Raymond to Mary Gray, his best beloved." The leaf was damp, and stained in various places. I felt sorry that I should mingle a tear where so many had fallen, dropped to the memory of love. I closed the volume. I heard not the solemn service,—not a syllable fell upon my ears. I looked up to the high roof; my eye measured the lofty pillars. Here had her sweet voice often sounded high above the organ; the bass on which she had so often knelt in prayer still stood at my feet, as when she last bowed upon it before her Maker. I saw not the kneeling group in the aisle—the sobs of the mourners floated by unheard. My fancy had wandered to other scenes: before the altar stood a goodly youth, his plumed helmet resting upon the cushion; his clothing was rich in crimson and gold;—a sword hung by his side. A fair maiden, with modest eyes bent downward, yielded to him her white hand; she wore a garland of flowers. I heard her whisper consent, and a ring was placed upon her slender finger; I saw her blush and look abashed into the youth's face," his eyes to hers replying." Then arose a sound — it was the loud Amen! Feet moved along the cold pavement.

I looked up—the wedding group was not there ; the cushions were unpressed ; the bearers had ranged themselves by the dead. Alas ! the bridegroom that my fancy had conjured up, slept in a distant land, and the bride rested beneath that white pall, in the cold embrace of Death !

We stood by her grave. It was of a deep black mould—a cold, dark bridal bed for one so lovely ! A handful of flowers was thrown in before the coffin was lowered ; I saw them lie in the grim depth ; and then a foot moved beside me, and a quantity of loose earth fell upon them. It made no noise as it fell upon the flowers. I could have looked down and moralized upon those flowers for hours, so soon crushed beneath that weight of earth, and woven them with the fate of Mary Gray until they would have become a portion herself; for I deemed that grief might at first alight upon that young heart with heavy weight, crushing its joys as the earth did those flowers, until, one by one, they would shrink beneath the load and die.

At last the coffin was let down slowly into the grave ; the burial service was then read, and the earth scattered upon the lid. How that hollow sound went to the heart, striking through the blood with a rapid chilliness, that searched through every vein as it sank deeper ! The weeping minister had just repeated the last words of the service, when a dove cooed from a neighbouring tree. I thought of the voice of her own sweet spirit mingling its mournful notes with ours. I stood by until the grave was closed. The white-headed old sexton refrained from trampling the mould down with his feet, but heaped it lightly upon her, and only smoothed it down with his spade. Yes, even he, who had a kindred feeling with Death, — who could exclaim,—

> " Come grin on me, and I will think thou smilest,
> And bless thee as thy wife. Misery's love !
> Oh ! come to me !"

even he felt pity in his cold breast, and strewed the earth lightly on a being so lovely. I turned round to depart, when a tall man dressed in black approached; he spoke not, but, throwing his hat amongst the withered grass, knelt beside the newly-raised hillock. His face was hidden in the folds of his handkerchief. He moaned deeply. I could only hear a few words that he uttered; they were reproaches upon himself. I beckoned to the sexton, and inquired who the mourner was. He answered, "The father of Henry Raymond;" adding, "had he acted like a father he might have made his son happy, and have had a daughter of whom a king might be proud. He might have saved two lives, and himself all this misery. But I shall have to make a grave for him soon."

I could not avoid repeating those beautiful verses by Collins as I turned homeward, and I feel how little store the reader will set by all that I have here written after perusing them.

"To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
But shepherd-lads assemble here,
And tender virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

The red-breast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain
  In tempest shake thy sylvan cell,
Or midst the chase on every plain,
  The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
  For thee the tear be duly shed:
Beloved till life can charm no more,
  And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead."

JACK GRAB.

His life was nigh unto death's door ye-placed,
And thread-bare coat and cobbled shoes he wore,
He scarce good morsel all his life did taste,
But both from back and belly still did spare,
To fill his bags and riches to compare;
Yet child nor kinsman living had he none
To leave them to, but thorough daily care
...et, and nightly fear to lose his own,
He led a wretched life unto himself unknown.

SPENSER'S *Faery Queen.*

ALMOST every town and village has its "unclaimed house," which is generally some dilapidated mansion that has been in Chancery since the memory of the oldest man in the village. Those who originally laid claim to the property have died off, until the building seems to have given itself up in very despair of ever having another owner, or only promising, at best, the victor at law a heap of ruins for his reward. Such a mansion have we in Warton Woodhouse,—every door and window having long ago shaken off the guardianship of lock and bolt, and rendered ingress and egress easy at all seasons. It had long been the shelter of the houseless beggar, the stray donkey, the homeless dog, and the play-ground of the village children in wet weather,—by turns, stable, cow-house, and pig-sty, until at last it was thought too insecure even for purposes like these. Just before it had all but become

"The raven's bleak abode,
The apartment of the toad,"

it was taken possession of by the well-known John Grapple, who was celebrated far and wide under the cognomen of Jack Grab. Jack was a collector of bones, rags, bits of iron, rope, broken glass, broken spoons,—in a word, of almost everything that everybody threw away. Sometimes he would pick up a little waste tin, and, gathering the wool from the gorse bushes and hedges, manufacture a curious kind of unnatural-looking lamb, such as would have fetched any money had it been possible to produce "its living like." With a basket full of such things as those he would visit the neighbouring villages singing,

> "If I 'd as much money as I could tell,
> I wouldn't cry out, young lambs to sell,—
> Young lambs to sell."

Many a mother has missed her pewter spoons during these peregrinations of Jack; for the children would cry for the lambs, and if their parents had neither bottle nor broken spoon to give, how easy was it for him to break them; nay, rumour said that he was not particular as to cramming them into his bag whole, and would receive any kind of linen, for old rags, which the youngsters brought him, without inquiring whether it had been filched from the drawer or off the hedge. Jack, be it known, was an arrant miser, a regular old "skin-flint" and "scrat"; one who would punish his belly a long summer's day to save a halfpenny. How he had ever managed to reconcile his conscience to pay Betty Coles sixpence a week for a room and the use of her back-yard, to keep his stores in, was to me a matter of mystery, so long as that old house had been without an occupant. However, he did it; although the old woman declared that it was like parting with six of his teeth, and he had seldom either bit or sup on rent day.

What visions of wealth floated before the eyes of the old

miser on the evening that he took up his residence in the old house! "Ah," said he to the old gardener, who had lent him a barrow to remove his stock, "ah, Mr. Anderton, if I had but removed here two years ago, I should have saved, —let me see,"—and he began to count his fingers, to sum up the number of sixpences; but the idea of such a loss was too horrible to contemplate, and he turned his thoughts to other matters. "Lots of room here, Mr. Anderton, for my different stores; — white rags here, this side for coarse rags. I 've lost many shillings through want of room to separate them; being forced to let white and coloured go all together, when there 's almost a farthing difference in the pound. Then, you see, I can also lay my beat iron aside from my cast. No, no; they 'll not get the best at the worst price any more, Mr. Anderton, as they have done. Then the saving of sixpence a-week,—a deal of money, you know, in the course of a year. I have heard of men making fortunes who only began with sixpence. Rome was not built in a day, you know. Take care of the pennies and the shillings will take care of themselves, is a good saying; and a better is, that a penny saved is a penny earned."

Jack did not act like the former possessors of the old mansion, who left access easy to every urchin that could lift up a hand to push the doors down or the windows open; but, on the contrary, he repaired the old lock, found a key among his old iron that would fit it, and having plenty of old nails, he soon made the window-shutters secure; adding, as a reason for all this caution, that he dared not trust his bone heap without lock and key where there were so many dogs. Betty Coles, however, assigned another reason, and said, that beneath the patches of divers colours which formed or covered his nether garment, there slumbered a few good spade-ace guineas; that with her own eyes she had peeped through the key-hole, and seen him

stitch many a one under a certain red patch in his said unmentionables.

The witty Rabelais somewhere observes, that his creditors are his flatterers, claw-backs, saluters, and givers of good-morrows. Now, Grab had none of these; and, according to the above-named authority, he might call in vain for aid or succour from either fire or murder, as no one would assist him, — nobody being concerned in his burning, his drowning, or his death; he spent next to nothing, and owed nobody a farthing. How he continued to live was a mystery, as he never even bought a loaf from the baker unless it was sun-dried, ropy, or mouldy, and could be purchased for half the usual price. If he bought a half-penny worth of old milk, he would add to it a quart of water, nay, even catch the drops that ran down the side of his porringer, when he drank, on the point of his knife, and lick them off; wetting his finger also, and picking up every crumb of mouldy bread which adhered thereto. He has been known to wage war with a mastiff for the half-picked bone, and to eat such garbage as the veriest beggar would have turned his nose up at. Grab had, however, his hobby; he had long passed the bits of cabbage leaves, potato parings, and other things which he could not well eat himself, with regret, and often thought that so much waste as he witnessed in his daily perambulations would keep a pig well. He had now plenty of room in the ruined house, no rent to pay, and he formed the resolution of keeping a pig, and laying out a sum of ready money in its purchase; — such a sum as he had never before in all his life expended at once.

Before entering upon his new speculation, he spent much time in ascertaining the price of pork and bacon; reckoned to a farthing what he should gain by selling it out and out to the butcher, or curing it himself, and disposing of a ham here and a flitch there; nor did he ever dream of

putting a morsel to his own lips. Great was the astonishment of butcher Crane at these inquiries; at first he thought that Grab intended to buy, but he soon discovered that the old miser had no such intention. Day after day, and week after week, did he scour the country in search of a cheap pig; hoarding up, in the mean time, rubbish enough to feed it for a month. Sometimes he would pause before the butcher's shop, and gazing on the huge sides of pork, picture to himself the time when he should have such to offer for sale, and inwardly praying that at that period it might fetch a great price. He wandered as far as the next town every market day, and was once or twice within a shilling of making a bargain; and one morning he saw a farmer purchase a whole litter of pigs saving one, and, to the amazement of Grab, it was the largest that he left behind. Grab took a close survey of the grunter before he ventured to ask the price, and also looked narrowly into the face of the man, for he had before been threatened with divers kickings for bidding so much below the sum named. "What may you be asking for that little thin pig," inquired he at length.

"Do you want to buy?" said the pig-jobber, in his turn eyeing Jack from head to foot, as if he doubted whether such a "thing of shreds and patches" possessed a sum of money sufficient for the purchase.

"That all depends upon what you may ask," answered the ever-cautious Grab. "I have had some thoughts of keeping one, you see, when I could meet with it cheap; but I 'm in no hurry—no hurry; only I thought, as it was the last, you might ask very reasonable for it. What is the very lowest you mean to take now — at a word?"

"Well, then, at a word, twelve shillings," replied the

pig-jobber; "and if you understand pigs at all, you must know that 's very cheap."

Grab looked at the man, then at the pig, then at the ground; he saw a rusty nail, but did not stoop to pick it up; he could afford to miss a nail for once, for he knew that the pig was very cheap; he had been asked eighteen shillings for one much less, and had even bid fifteen. "Will he eat well?" was the next inquiry.

"Eat!" exclaimed the countryman. "Ay, any mander of thing; there isn't a pig in the county with a better appetite. Bless you! when he was among the other pigs he used to root all the tit-bits into one corner of the trough, and have them to himself,—he 's a deep pig."

"Is his health good?" inquired Grab; "for I reckon pigs are somewhat like Christians, liable to a few complaints now and then."

"He 's as hard as nails," answered the pig-jobber, "and never had an hour's illness since he was born; when all the rest were ill, he was up and eating; and he cut his teeth like winking."

"Well, then," said Grab, drawing in his breath heavily, and speaking in a faint tone, "I 'll give you ten shillings for him;" and he thrust his hand into his pocket, that he might feel the smooth silver once again before he parted with it for ever.

"Too little," said the man. "I 'll stand a tankard of ale and bread and cheese, but I 'll take no less." But he did take less, after much bantering; for he sold his pig for eleven shillings, and gave the old miser three pence for his share of the refreshment, as he excused himself from going to the alehouse for want of time. It is impossible to sketch Grab as he looked when paying the money into the broad brown open hand of the pig-jobber. First he pulled out

three shillings, and laid them down in the form of a triangle, muttering, " It 's a deal of money to part with at once." Then he drew out two more, growling deeper than ever ; the next time he put his hand in his pocket, he fished up but one shilling, saying, " That makes six, and the pig may die ;— a deal of money,— a great risk. I almost wish——"

" Hark you," said the countryman, closing his hand on the six shillings, " if you don't pull out the other five a little quicker, I shall walk off with both the pig and the money ; — so pay the remainder down, then grumble as much as you like after ; — a bargain 's a bargain." The threat had the desired effect ; at one desperate plunge Grab dragged up three more shillings, — two more rapid dives into his pocket drew forth the remainder, — and heaving a deep sigh, he paid for the pig.

Long and many were the contests between Grab and his pig before they reached Warton Woodhouse, nor did he get clear of the market-town without encountering many perils, for the pig seemed willing to go any road but the right one ; and instead of " larding the lean earth," like Falstaff, he showed no more marks of fatigue than a piece of parchment which has been blown across the road. He soon managed to slip the string, and bolting from Grab, shot between the legs of a little lawyer, on whose silk stockings he left the marks which he himself had gathered in a gutter. But the dire disaster was running against a table which was covered with bottles of ginger beer, and carrying away a leg of it, which had but that morning been indifferently spliced with very slender string. The proprietor of this rickety establishment, without once pausing to listen to the hiss and fizz, and foam and tumult, among his broken bottles, set off full speed after Grab and the grunter ; deeming, no doubt, that the old adage of one bird in the hand being worth two in the bush, might be applied to his case of the pig. Away shot the

porker at more than a pig's speed, and luckily he took the very road which Grab had in vain attempted to drive him, plainly showing that although roads "were as plentiful as blackberries, he would take none of them upon compulsion;" never did a pig shoot off at such speed! he would have won the St. Leger from all the tribe of pork. He had no more fat upon him than a dead stick; he "lay to the earth," to use a sporting phrase, like a greyhound; for, like Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," he was—

> "Long, lank, and brown,
> As is the ribb'd sea-sand."

After the grunter went Grab, and after both the ginger-beer man, who, being fat and asthmatical, groaned again like a railway engine when it is stopped, and shouting (a word at a time), "Stop—that—pig—stop—that—man—they 've—ru-in-ed—me—my—beer—pig—man—table—bottles—dam-a-ges." Butcher-boys and dogs joined in the chase at full cry; never had such shouting and yelling been heard at that peaceful end of the town since the day of election, when, to show their independence, they pelted out both the candidates. Fortunately for Grab, a whole herd of swine chanced to be before him, their noses pointing twenty ways; and as his own pig shot through their bristling ranks without a pause, and turned up a narrow lane, he was soon lost to his pursuers, and shut out from all eyes except Grab's. It need not be wondered at, that out of so large a herd of swine, the ginger-beer man at last "caught the wrong pig by the ear;" for one more nimble than the rest shot out from his companions, and was followed by both men and dogs until he was captured, when the mistake was found out; but how rectified, our story sayeth not.

After many ins-and-outs, shoutings and kickings, and divers coaxings, and not a few turns at carrying him, Jack

and his pig at length reached home in safety; one corner of the store and sleeping room was also allotted for his new companion, which he intended so kindly to nurse up for death: this corner was partitioned off with an old door or two, "just to keep him," as he himself remarked, "from getting at the bones." We must now suppose the old miser to have lost three or four days in making a trough for his pig, to have had sundry twitchings of the shoulder in carrying "swill" or dish-washings, and that he had also so far recovered the shock of laying out so much money as to have had at least two hours' sleep on the previous night; that he had also resumed his old trade of collecting bones and rags, and now carried an extra bag, to pick up whatever he could for his pig. Further, we must suppose that, to his sorrow, Grab had discovered that the pig possessed a terrible appetite; that what food he had calculated upon lasting a month, was all consumed the first week; that even a month had rolled over, and the pig had not increased an hair's breadth in either length or width; that if he grew at all, it was less.

Poor Grab! in vain did he clamber into the sty every morning, and with a piece of string measure his pig round the middle; he made a knot, but still the measurement was the same to-day as yesterday; if he ever swelled a finger's-breadth after having had a pail of slops, the next day he shrunk back to his old familiar size. In vain did Grab labour day after day, rising with the sun, and stooping to pick up food for his ravenous pig until the day declined; bagful after bagful, and pailful after pailful, did he empty into the hungry monster's trough; but all was of no use; the pig had long ago done growing. Had he dined with an alderman daily he would never have grown fatter; he looked just as sharp on the back, and gaunt in the belly, and long on the legs, as he did on the very day when he overthrew the

ginger-beer, and outstripped both men and dogs. Food was of no avail—the more he ate, the more he wanted; there he was—always alike, (excepting just at the few moments spent in eating,) his trough empty, and himself rearing up beside the sty, and squealing like a very pig. Grab might as well have made a hole through the floor, and by pouring pig's-meat into the cellar, expected the old house to have grown fat. Poor Grab! he was almost at his wit's end; he wandered about day after day in quest of nothing but food for his pig; he no longer stooped to pick up old iron or old rags, he was only on the look-out for something to appease the squealing of his ravenous porker; for he declared that he had no peace at home, neither day nor night, unless his pig was either asleep or eating; nay, that he was often compelled to arise in the night, and pour a pail of water into his trough, to keep him quiet. But, oh! worst of all, nobody pitied poor old Grab: if they inquired how his pig got on, and he told them all his misery, they only laughed at him; even the very boys would shout out after him, "There goes Grab with a bagful of dirt for his pig;" or "Jacky, how's pork selling?" At length, however, the old man learned to bear their taunts, and went his way without either answering their questions or resenting their abuse; he had but one friend who appeared to sympathise with him, and that was the old farrier.

"Well," said Jacky, as he met the old horse-doctor one morning, "it's all of no use, Mr. Carter; I stuff him and cram him till every bone in my body aches with carrying food for him. I 've even pinched my own belly to fill his, and it's all of no use; he grows no more than a pin. The other day, while I was out, he broke loose and ate up all my little bones, which had taken me days and days in gathering, and I do believe that if my old iron hadn't been rather too hard for his jaws, he'd have eaten it all up, rump and stump. What to do with him, I don't know; I 'm a ruined man, Mr.

Carter; eleven shillings, all at once, did I lay out; but oh! what a waste of money! Then the days that I have spent in bringing home food for him! He eats as much at a meal as would serve me for a month."

"Very strange!" muttered the old farrier. "Perhaps he 's got the worms: I'd advise you to give him a little worm-cake."

"Worm-cakes!" echoed Grab; "they must be as large as half-peck loaves for him to feel them. Bless you, sir, you 've no notion of what he can swallow."

"Well," resumed the other, "I would sell him."

"Worse and worse," replied Grab: "but who will buy him, think you? I got our butcher to look at him the other day, and he says, 'Jacky,' says he, 'he 's very old.'—'Think so?' says I. 'Very,' says he: 'I should say by his teeth, at least seven years old.'—'How would he eat?' says I. 'Like your old shoes,' says he; 'very tough indeed.' So you see there 's no selling him."

"Well, then, I would kill him," said the farrier, "and make him into pork pies and sell them; people, you know, never lift up the crust to see what 's inside."

"Won't do," answered Grab; "I 'll lay no money out on flour for the crusts; beside, there would be no lard to make them eat short; no, I 'll spend no more money upon him, Mr. Carter. I 'm a ruined man."

"Well, well," said the old farrier, somewhat sharply, for he had almost exhausted both his reasons and his patience, "well, well, kill him—and eat him yourself."

"Over expensive," groaned Grab; "it would be like eating money."

A few days after his interview with the farrier a great change took place: the pig would not touch its food; Grab offered it a bread-crust, one that he had reserved for his own eating, but it scarcely took any notice—it gave a faint grunt,

and then laid down its head again — the pig was dying. Away went the old miser to the butcher to get him to kill the pig instantly; it was night, and the butcher had gone to bed; Jack thundered at the door, and the old man poked out both head and night-cap, and inquired, in none of the mildest of tones, what was his business. "My pig is dying," said Grab, "and I want him killed."

"Humph!" muttered the butcher; "never kill dying pigs, Mr. Grab; never deal in keg-meg; you must go to Hawking Georgey;" and down went the window. Now, Hawking Georgey, be it known, was notorious for selling bad meat; was never known to purchase anything unless it was very cheap, and paid but little regard to the quality; he kept no shop, but went hawking his trash from cottage to cottage, and selling it just for what he could get. To him poor Grab hastened, and after a long parley, (for Georgey would not kill the pig for less than two shillings,) the old miser promised him a shilling and the offals, and away they went together. When they reached the old man's dwelling they found the pig dead, "dead as a door nail," to use Georgey's expression; and although he confessed that he had occasionally dealt in queer cattle, he could not be persuaded to show his butcher-craft on that occasion.

Poor Grab! such a serious loss—coupled with his "high expectation," broke his heart, and he never looked *down* after it, never stooped to pick up either rags or old iron again; there was a "lack lustre" in his eyes, and when he walked they always seemed fixed upon some object in the distance; everybody saw that he was an altered man. About a month after the death of his pig, Jack Grab gave up the ghost, and as a wag observed, he caught his death from a surfeit of pig. He lies buried in the beautiful little churchyard of Warton Woodhouse, and there was some talk of erecting a head-stone to his memory, but this has not yet been done. The

following epitaph, was, however, composed for the occasion, and whether it will be used or not, time alone must decide.

"Here lies Jack Grab, who picked up all things nor nothing past,
No marvel then that Death should pick him up at last:
No weighty grief destroyed him, he died all for a pig,
And would have lived, no doubt, had the object of his grief been big.
We erect him this small head-stone, no larger could we build him,
The object of whose grief was—so very small it kill'd him.

"This epitaph was made by me, John Harding, Stone-mason, Warton Wood-house."

BONNY BELL.

Good heaven! what sorrows gloomed that parting day,
That called them from their native walks away;
When the poor exiles, every pleasure past,
Hung round the bowers, and fondly looked their last,
And took a long farewell, and wished in vain
For seats like these beyond the western main;
And shuddering still to face the distant deep,
Returned and wept, and still returned to weep.

GOLDSMITH.

TO-NIGHT at "dark hour," — it is a country phrase; in London, I have heard them say "between lights," — I sat with my feet on the fender, sometimes watching the flickering fire-light as it cast a smile upon the hearth, or turning my gaze occasionally on the heavens to see the "daylight die," or marking the deepening shadows, too indolent or too thoughtful to light my candle. To me twilight is a solemn hour, — I feel sad without knowing why, thoughtful and serious, yet unable to assign the reason. Neither dawn, nor darkness, nor moonlight can produce this feeling, or throw such a "sober livery" over the mind. There is a something about this hour that to me appears allied to the close of life, the sunset of all our hopes and sorrows: the deepening grey seems a fitting light to gather over the "silent city of the dead," a meet hour to sit beside the grave of one we have loved, and weep our fill. But other thoughts arose in my mind; my fancy had travelled to the home of my childhood, to the green and wooded hills by which I was born; the images

of those I had loved glided to and fro along the walls, as the fire shot out its tongue of flame, or sank into its sober gilding. In just such a light as that we were wont to congregate around each other's hearths and tell strange tales, such as best suited that dreamy and unclouded state of life. Even now every face of that group is before me, every name is fresh in my memory: how different with the real actors themselves—that cluster of mingled heads which the glowing fire-light gilded! Where are they?

Oh memory! I know not whether to call thee a painful or a pleasant companion; thou bringest as many heart-aches as smiles, and seemest readier to offer what we would for ever forget, than that which we would cling to with such fond remembrance! What a number of homes, what a variety of scenes, what changes, faces, voices, sounds, and sights glide before the "mind's eye," or ring upon the ear of our memory, while we sit chasing thought after thought, and conversing to ourselves with life and death! Every remembrance brings with it a story; we cannot call to mind a single individual, and run over the changes which they have undergone, without finding some striking point or other in their history. Their lives, their deaths, their marriages, their misfortunes, speculations, adventures, all present something

"To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

Although these are idle speculations, I cannot remember any one whom I have known from boyhood, and become acquainted with his progress through life up to the present time, without finding something that dwelt upon the mind, and added another page to that so little-read history, "The Life of Man."

Only a month ago, one of my old play-fellows visited me. I had not seen him since our boyish days; fifteen years had glided by since we last met. I had forgotten a thousand little

incidents which he remembered. I had been a dreamer, wasting my youth over books whenever I could spare a few hours from labour; he had sailed thousands of miles—had shivered amid the icy mountains of Greenland, and been browned beneath the burning sun of Africa. I had become acquainted with what Chaucer and Spenser, Shakspeare and Milton, and a thousand others had written; he had seen the Laplander in his own dark land, and mingled with the half-thinking savages in their wild scenes—had been tempest-tost, shipwrecked, a wanderer, hungry and naked, on a foreign shore. But our thoughts had often been together; although mountains and seas divided us, he confessed that in the still or stormy night-watch, his mind had wandered back to the home of our childhood, and that when even despair gathered darkly around him, he sent many a sigh through the awful gloom to those who had mingled with him in his happier days. His heart had wandered homeward.

But it boots not here to sum up how many names we ran over, and how many and varied were the answers to the questions I put about those whom I had well known;—their histories were soon told. Some were drowned or killed by accident, others had died at home; some were married, some had become rich; others were wanderers and beggars, had gone abroad, and never been heard of since. So we ran through the volume

"Of this strange, eventful history;"

youth and beauty, old age and suffering, passed before us like the procession in a dream: we went from village to village, from hearth to hearth; saw who were gone, and who remained; some were richer, others poorer, many just struggling with the same difficulties which they had to encounter fifteen years ago; but they had all their tale to tell. To-night my memory wandered, I know not why, to one of those past scenes, and recalled one of those simple stories

which we hear almost every day, and seldom dwell upon after.

Twenty years ago, not a lovelier girl brought her butter and eggs to Gainsborough market than Isabella Howe; her name rang far and wide over that part of the country; almost every one knew — "Bonny Bell." Her father was a farmer, well-to-do in the world, and never allowed his "blue-eyed Bell," as he familiarly called her, to be behindhand with the best of her neighbours in appearance. The dress of the period, for the more respectable daughters of the farmers, was then a long riding habit and hat, and but few figures alighted at the Black's Head equal in form and beauty to Isabella. Even the new-booted squire, if he chanced to be passing, would push the rude ostler aside and assist the rural beauty to dismount, holding one of her sweet smiles as a rich guerdon for such service. Right proud was old Farmer Howe and his wife of their lovely daughter. Even the independent lady, who in Lincolnshire is not yet too proud to make her own markets, accompanied by her servant, would buy her butter of the rustic beauty without first tasting it; "as sweet as violets," was the phrase they used when speaking of the butter made by Bonny Bell. The dandy draper confounded his colours and prices before her, and forgot his measurement, while intent upon making himself "amiable" in her eyes. Even the "bettermost sort" of the young farmers, when they saw her grey palfrey brought out for her to return, would gulp down their wine, and call out "ostler" in a breath, for dearly they loved to ride a mile or two homeward beside Bonny Bell.

Never had a rustic beauty more homage paid to her than Isabella Howe; the gallant fox-hunter would steal over the home-fields from the chase, and with the pretext of tasting Dame Howe's home-brewed, chat an hour away with the lovely maiden. On a Sunday she was besieged with

suitors, who under colour of talking over crops and weather with the old farmer, contrived to walk beside him from the church to their own home-field, that they might now and then exchange a word with his fair daughter; the dashing butcher would also ride over in his best suit,—for who could refuse buying the fat lambs which had been reared under her eye? Nor would the well-dressed young grocer permit the goods to be sent home by the carrier's cart. "Oh! Miss Howe, it will be no trouble for me to ride over with them; beside, I have to call at a place or two," was the answer. No, he could not await the return of market-day without seeing Bonny Bell.

Great was the gossip in Warton Woodhouse among the old and young women on the number of wooers who so frequently visited the Wood-Grange; match after match was prophesied—

"Another and another still succeeded—"

and still it was uncertain who would bear away the bell. Meantime the pretty maiden continued to laugh with the gayest, and to all appearance gave no one the preference, but seemed alike kind to all, diffusing hope unintentionally, and scattering smiles on all comers, without once thinking how many hearts beat beneath them.

Among the wooers was a butcher, a bluff, broad-featured, devil-may-care kind of fellow, who never would deign to ride a horse unless it had been the means of breaking two or three necks, and had been given up by every one besides himself as unmanageable. He would not give a straw to visit either fair or wake unless he could muster two or three fights, he was always the first to pick a quarrel: wrestling, cock-fighting, and badger-baiting were his delight; in a word, he was the ringleader of every rustic merriment or uproar. How he crept into the favour of Bonny Bell was a marvel to every one, and to none more than old Deborah Day. "Yon-

der goes mad Butcher Heron," the old woman would exclaim to her gossip, as she uplifted her eyes from her knitting, just to catch a glance of his blue frock laps, which flew out behind, while he clattered by at full gallop. "What her father and mother can be thinking on to harbour such a harum-skarum rack-a-pelt, I can't for a moment imagine, while there are so many respectable, and peaceable, and well-to-do-in-the-world sort of young men as there are coming to see Bell. What a gentlemanly-looking and well-behaved young fellow is John Fowler the draper, and what a good trade he has to boot! Why, a wife of his would have a life like a lady, and wear the very best that ever came down in Pickford's waggons from Lunnun. But to think for a minute of having such a swearing, drunken, fighting, mad-brained chap as Butcher Heron! Marry! if she were my bairn, big as she is, I would lock her up in her chamber for a month first, and feed her on nought but bread and milk. Look at his nasty dirty shop—he never has anything fit to be seen in it; sometimes a sheep's head and pluck are hanging at the door, or a beast's cheek, happen, fairly black and dried again in the sun. For my part, I wouldn't have him if there wasn't another man in the world; no, not if every hair of his head was hung with diamonds."

However, in spite of all Deborah said, the Butcher won the day; he carried her off in the face of all opposition: and she took possession of the shop, and drew more custom to it than any other butcher had within ten miles of the neighbourhood. "Oh! who could cut off a steak or a chop like Bonny Bell? there was always such a sweet smile accompanying all she did, that you could not for the world haggle about the odd ounce, or beg off the odd halfpenny. "What a fine show of meat had Butcher Heron then, how clean his shop was kept, how bright the scales, and the chopping-block and the shelves how white they were scoured! What it was to have a

woman, and where was there such another woman as Mrs. Heron?" So said the gossips, and things went on comfortable and flourishing. John Heron attended more to his business, and less to his pleasures; wore top-boots, drove over to his wife's father's on a Sunday in the light cart, and cracked his whip proudly as he cast a look of tenderness at his handsome wife, and one of triumph on her old suitors whenever he chanced to pass them. So matters went on until after the birth of a daughter, when the husband began by degrees to return to his old habits. It was, however, a long time before a change took place in their circumstances, for Bonny Bell was a good manager; she bought in stock, and many of the old farmers, who had known her from a child, used to drop in when they had a prime calf to dispose of, or a fat lamb or two that they intended to get "shut of." So she managed to keep matters afloat long after her husband had ceased to care about anything more than having money to spend, and the full liberty of following his brutal amusements.

For five or six years did Bonny Bell and her apprentice carry on business, although every spring brought an increase of family, and managed to find the reprobate husband with spending-money, and to keep out of debt, at least so far as to pay the farmers and graziers on a market day for what cattle they had purchased in the week. So he might have drunk and roystered, and scoured the country, and never have been missed; but at last he took to cards, was to be seen from morning to night in the half-lighted parlour of the Sot's-hole with three or four others—equally lazy and drunken as himself. Bonny Bell furnished him with money while she had it; sometimes she pleaded with him, and when he had gone, retired to her chamber and gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. I shall not trace him downward until he became a very scamp, and his name a reproach: I love not to depict such misery. One strange trait,

who have fallen from their "high estate" through the harsh treatment of those above them, when a kind word or two might have preserved them from all their misery.

Nothing, perhaps, can be more just than the trial by jury, but be it remembered that in the agricultural districts these juries consist of the farmers and the country gentry, whose interests compel them to be severe upon trespassers and other offenders brought before them. They too often look at the crime itself committed, without paying a due regard to the previous character of the individual before them. He is a poacher, and that is sufficient to call down their punishment ; — he pleads guilty, and the business is soon hurried through. When a greater crime is brought before them, they neglect to trace its progress, all motives are forgotten, all causes are put aside, circumstances are thrown out of the scale altogether. The man has been goaded on to madness by a thousand things which have made against him ; he had no comforter, no friend, no adviser ; his rich neighbours looked coldly upon him, and he at length became reckless ; he found that honesty met with no encouragement, and that knavery, although never respected, was sometimes feared. Such men as I speak of have seldom known human kindness : no spirit like the philanthropic Howard's has whispered comfort to their bosoms. They are as much slaves as the Saxon serfs were under the Norman conquerors,—they are all but chained to the glebe. One noble fellow I knew, whose career I could trace until it set in darkness ; he was shunned by his neighbours, and hated for his honest independence. Yet that man had a right heart within him, and was full of human kindness ; but his cruel task-masters turned his gentle blood to gall ; they drove him to desperation, and his end was death.

But this is a digression, and one that I wish I had never

had cause to make;— ere long I shall "say my say" on this matter. But to return.

In the case of John Heron, poaching led to greater evils; nor was anybody surprised at its results—his whole life seemed to point to such a termination; he fell from no great height,—no one was surprised. The matter was winked at by the gamekeepers, as it has been thousands of times, while they have partaken of the booty. But hares were not in those days fit things to hang in a butcher's shop, and by the aid of his companions they took to sheep-stealing. I might here again paint all the anguish of Bonny Bell's mind, her suspicions, her pleadings, and her interrogations; the latter of which were parried by some glozed tale or other, which the poor, broken-hearted creature was compelled to hear, if not believe. However, as I am but writing sketches, I shall not enter into the dramatic part of the story. He was at last detected, tried, and transported for life, and his wife and children were thrown upon the parish: how she bore this, will be more readily imagined than told;— words cannot well depict what is felt; tears she shed in abundance, till it seemed as if the fountain was exhausted; then she became moody and silent, and, after a while, submitted to her fate without a murmur.

The torrent of grief that before tore through her bosom in sobs and tears, had subsided;— it flowed along its course more silently, for it had worn a deeper channel through the heart. So rolls the stream down a hill, rushing with a loud noise along its narrow and shallow bed, but becoming more silent as it joins the water-course in the valley, and glides away, sullen, and deep, and almost soundless.

Time rolled on, and her husband became an altered man; amid his solitude and exile he reflected on his past deeds, and would have foregone every comfort if he could but have had his days to come over again. His new master was

a kind-hearted man, and soon discovered that his repentance was sincere, and as he was aware of his convict's good judgment in cattle, he promoted him to the situation of head shepherd, and furnished him with a sum of money to bring over his wife and family. Poor Bell! this was all she desired; she had long been ashamed to lift up her head, for she felt that her husband's disgrace clung to herself and children, and she made speedy preparations for her departure. It was the last summer's day that she should ever pass in her native country; all things were in readiness for her long journey, which was to commence early on the next morning, and she felt a yearning to visit the home of her childhood for the last time. She left her children to the care of a neighbour, and set out alone; her father and mother had long been dead; the farmhouse had fallen into other hands; the trees which she had planted and tended, then belonged to the stranger. The old garden-hedge, in which so many birds were wont to build their nests, was demolished, and in its place stretched a pointed and wooden-fence, that completely altered the features of the scene. The summer-arbour, which she had wreathed so fantastically with ivy and woodbine, was also destroyed, and an unsightly-looking hut erected on the spot; while under the parlour-window, where her long row of bee-hives had stood, there grew a few heads of sickly cabbage. All was changed: the picturesque thatch, overgrown with beautiful creepers, and furnishing a home for so many birds, had been removed, and the sloping beams of a summer sunset fell upon a glaring roof of red tiles. She saw nothing around her once-beloved home to covet—her native land had lost all its charms to her. She returned, and seemed to chide the hours because they delayed her departure so long. With the morning light she arose, and as the vessel which was to convey her to the sea-port from whence she embarked for a foreign shore, was lying at anchor a mile up the river, she

went the short distance on foot with her children; perchance,

> "Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
> The world was all before them, where to choose
> Their place of rest, and Providence their guide,
> They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
> Through Eden took their solitary way."

THE COUNTRY FAIR.

A Wake! the booths whitening the village-green,
Where Punch and Scaramouch aloft are seen;
Sign beyond sign, in close array unfurled,
Picturing at large the wonders of the world;
And far and wide over the vicar's pale,
Black hoods and scarlet crossing hill and dale;
All, all abroad, and music in the gale.

ROGER'S *Human Life.*

RIGHT glad was I in former days when the time for holding Wharton feast arrived; for as it usually took place about the same period when two large fairs were held in the neighbourhood, there was no lack of those agreeable vagabonds called "showmen;" for they generally so contrived matters as to stay a day or two at the feast. I love a country fair

or feast, it seems to put mankind so much upon a level; there the squire and his daughter are likely to be jostled by their own footman, especially in our primitives villages, where you see the parson and the pedagogue pushing between the ploughman and the pauper, where the maid edges the mistress, and for once, all are privileged to laugh alike at the same exhibition. Then with what veneration did we gaze upon those heroic figures who trod with martial step along the stage, folding their arms and looking unutterable things upon us poor bumpkins whose heads were imbedded together below! Oh! what terrible men they looked! and if one of them deigned to speak to us, how highly were we honoured. Marvellous were those dresses in our eyes, for then all was gold that glittered; and we saw only kings and warriors before us; men whom slaves obeyed, and at whose bidding whole legions rushed to battle. Then those queens and royal maidens, they to whom the great kings and valiant warriors bowed, and spoke such language as we deemed "was fit utterance for the gods!" Oh! how we marvelled at their surpassing loveliness, at the pure red and white of their most beautiful countenances. They looked more lovely than nature—so like those fine pictures outside, we felt that if we were princes and warriors we could kneel at the same fair feet and resign our swords and sceptres without regret. Alas for the wayward heart! the charms of Molly and Dolly were forgotten; queens moved before us in our sleep, and spangled trains trailed over our slumber; for a day at least we seemed to live among the gods. Then how awful was that ghost in "real armour!" how unearthly his countenance, how real the thunder and lightning! What screams did the rustic maidens give when Don Raymond Realto was stabbed! Oh! those were glorious days—we saw and we believed. Alas! we had never then witnessed Hamlet putting a patch on his own coat, or

seen the fair Ophelia stitch a pair of thrice-darned silk feet to worsted leggings; we knew not then that those purely white petticoats which showed the rich pink beneath were made of the same material as the old cobler's window curtains, and cost but twopence per yard. We believed that the bumpers they drank were of real wine; that they slept in crimson tents; nor could we scarce believe our eyes when we first saw the Queen of Denmark turn out from a tailor's where she and her royal husband lodged, and in a vile earthen jug fetch a halfpennyworth of small beer!

But, oh! what were these things compared to the merry groups and laughing faces which were constantly passing through the village street! What gaudy printed gowns the rustic maidens wore; such patterns of flowers as mother earth never produced; large roses of four or five colours mingled with sea-shells, and blue and yellow leaves all springing from one stem, and that not unlike the tail of a kite! Then how harmoniously their various-coloured shawls blended with the deep scarlet cloaks of the elderly personages, and the sober russet tints of the old farmer, all varied and dotted when examined minutely; yet, as a whole, producing a beauty, and a breadth, and a keeping, like some rich picture. The faces of the maidens too seemed to resemble their own flower-gardens; there was the snow-drop so delicate and retiring, the primrose looking boldly up in its innocence, the daisy only plain because it grows so commonly, the rose-bud red and beautiful;—and so might the fancy go on imagining and tracing in each face a resemblance to some flower. Then there were the rural swains, fine healthy-looking fellows, with faces overflowing with good nature, and minds made up for rustic enjoyment. There they stood with their rough hats on, the down rubbed purposely the wrong way, to show how much *beaver* there was on, while the band or riband hung down nearly a quarter of a yard. The red and yellow silk neck-

erchief (bought for real India of some wandering vagabond, who swore they were smuggled,) was knowingly knotted by the rustic dandy; both corners being left loose to play with the winds, and keep an incessant fluttering upon his cheeks. Their coats were also made with plenty of room to grow in; some long and reaching down to the calf, and fitting like a stocking on the leg of a chicken; and at the knees of their corduroys hung a length of untied ribands, while above drooped a quarter of a yard of the same material of a glaring red, to which were appended two large brass seals and a copper key, all of which had been purchased of some wandering Jew as sterling gold. Some also held the hooks of the sticks in their mouths, and kept exclaiming, "By gum, Jack, didst see how fine Molly was?"

But the great charm of these feasts is the meeting of absent friends,—mothers and daughters, fathers and sons, and all the line of kith and kin on these occasions. You see a fine strapping young girl walking briskly along some winding foot-path; she looks around her and smiles; she has been in service perhaps a year or two, and for the first time during that period she again treads on her old play-ground. An aged woman in spectacles is looking out anxiously from a low doorway—twenty to one it is overgrown with woodbine or ivy; she observes the figure approaching, and says to some other old woman who has been her gossip for above forty years, "Yon's my Mary." "I think it's a hand too tall for her," replies the gossip. "No," says the anxious mother, pausing and looking more narrowly, "it is! it's my own dear bairn!" and away she runs with open arms, and is met at full speed by Mary, who throws down her little bundle on the grass, and they are locked in each other's arms, while such heart-uttered words, as "Oh! my blessed bairn, how happy I am to see thee! I've done nought but think about thee all night; I've hardling had a wink of sleep." "My

dear old mother," is whispered with a fervent embrace, and a tear of joy steals down their cheeks in testimony of their affection.

The meeting of father and son is equally joyous, but the current of feeling is kept more subdued; a deep manliness is displayed on each side, and the firm shake of the hand again and again repeated, and the "Welcome to the feast, my lad John; I'm heartily pleased to see thee, my lad;—"And I'm glad you are looking so well, father;" these are all faint embodiments of what they feel; but they will before night grow warm over the ale-cup, and many a thought will then find utterance, and show how noble and warm a heart often beats, under the rude garb of the peasant.

But we must away into the fair, and here we are amid the squealing of trumpets and the bellowing of voices. See where the pedlar is displaying his ribands on the ground; no stall, nothing has he but the coarse wrapper in which he carries his stock. Here comes a jolly farmer's lad, half-drunk, with his arm round Betty's waist: we guessed aright, — he means to purchase her a riband.

"I say, measter, what may yah be axing a yard for that gress-green riband?"

"Twopence," answers the pedlar.

"Come then," continues the swain, "and slash my Bet a brace of yards off." Then looking drunkenly amorous at her, he adds, "Ah, my lass! I do luv you some; I luv you better than I do old Ball, and a harder working little horse was never put between a pair of shafts. Now if there's any other coloured riband thou would like more than that gress-green, say it at once, an' thou shall hae it, whether it be real red, sky-blue, or plum-colour; thou'rt as welcome as flowers in May to aught I hae," continued he, pulling out a little yellow bag and shaking the silver which it contained.

"Put up thy money, Johnny," said his fair partner, "and don't be such a fool as to put thysen to such spense (expense) on my account."

In they bundle to the old public house, and you hear John shout out to the landlady, "Mrs. Warde, let us hae (have) threepenneth of hot gin and watter, and a lump of sewgar in it."

The hot gin and water is brought by the red-haired ostler, who is metamorphosed into a waiter at fair-time, and wears a white apron. "I say, Sammy," shouted John, eyeing his gin and water, "why the dickens didn't thou bring me a sewgar bruster to mash my lump wi'?" Sammy returned with a broken pewter table spoon, for all the sugar bruisers were in use.

On we wended to where a gathered crowd stood with mouths agape before the most wretched-looking establishment we had ever witnessed at our feast. On a stage, which was ascended by a broken ladder, (which, on general occasions, led to mine hostess's hay-loft,) stood a tall, dark, gipsy-looking woman, vociferating, "Walk up! walk up! only one penny, to see the king of all conjurors! We will forfeit a thousand pounds if such another exhibition is to be found in England;—walk up! the company are about to begin,—the apparatus is now ready." This said apparatus consisted of a table, a pack of cards, a board to tumble on, and a few cups and balls; all, except the cups and balls, being the property of mine hostess; even the covering of the establishment was a large waggon tilt which farmer Jobson had generously lent them. A one-eyed fiddler, a stray bird from Boswell's gang (who were in the parlour), stood scraping away in the background, and rolling his odd eye, not by any perceptible regulation, but, like a comet, it seemed to move in an eccentric orbit, or as one of the rustics expressed it, "looked nine ways at once," and seemed quite capable of glancing round

a corner. The "king of all the conjurors" could not weigh much less than sixteen stone; and his department outside was to jump, dance, and now and then, by way of resting himself, to clash a brace of cracked cymbals together, almost large enough for copper lids, which he did until the perspiration ran from his brow in torrents; then he wiped his forehead on a jacket sleeve, which in the earlier part of the day had been white. He had also shown his skill in stuffing his mouth with burning flax, and emitting, as from a furnace, sparks of fire. A blazing grease-pot stood on the front of the stage, at which the flax had been ignited. The fiddler scraped and squinted away in the background, his ragged elbow keeping time to the roll of his odd eye; the tall dark woman shouted to the highest pitch of her voice, and quickly raised her one thousand pounds to ten. Even the conjuror seemed to have caught a new spirit; and, for so fat a man, vaulted to an extraordinary height, until the very boards bent again beneath him, and the whole stage shook like a young poplar in a breeze. The fiddler rolled his eye with increasing rapidity, as if there had been a race between his eye and his elbow; the tall woman's tongue also joined in the chase, and went as fast as a lawyer's, while the cymbals clashed, and the conjuror jumped with more vigour than ever.

"The mirth and glee grew fast and furious."

when all at once a loud crash was heard, and down came the entire establishment. The conjuror alone escaped, but even he leaped out of the frying-pan into the fire, for just as the stage was receding from beneath him, he made one of his boldest bounds, and leaped amid the gaping crowd, exclaiming as he flew, "Oh, crackee! what a go!" And so it was when he alighted, for his enormous bulk prostrated five or six peasants, who, not relishing such an unceremonious knocking

down, began to pummel the poor show-man right and left; and he, instead of resenting this uncalled-for treatment, made the best of his way through the crowd, his agility being stimulated by the kicks and cuffs he received by the way. However, instead of deploring his misfortunes, he very philosophically rushed into the public-house, and called for a "go of gin and a pipe of tobacco." The poor fiddler was the most unfortunate, for he fell amid the thickest of the wreck, with his elbow in the blazing grease-pot, and his fiddle was smashed to atoms by the fall. When he was rescued from the ruins, he stood still for a moment, and opened his odd eye upon the desolation with a peculiar pathos; then glancing downwards, he heaved a deep sigh as he squinted at his fiddle, shook his head, and exclaimed, "What a go 's here!" he shrugged his shoulders as he rubbed his elbow, and then went to join the conjuror. The woman (who doubtless held all the money they had taken) was never seen again.

While wandering along by the skirts of the crowd, you espy some little man in the rear of a group of tall fellows who ever and anon attempts to bob his head between their elbows, to catch a glance of what is going forward, but all in vain. He hears the merry laughter ringing out both near and afar off; he stretches his neck, strains his little legs until the sinews crack again, and jumps up and down like a dancing dog; but all is useless, for unless he is fortunate enough to procure three or four bricks, or the tall fellows make room for him, all his share of the fun will only be to hear the aggravating laughter.

"Then there was the "lucky bag," held by a grim-looking fellow, whose very looks would have hanged him before any discriminating jury; or, perchance it was a tall woman, wearing a man's great-coat and heavy laced boots; she had also a velvet bonnet, one which had once been black, but

was then as many colours as the coping-stone of a castle-wall, green and grey, mottled and weather-beaten,—with the melancholy adornment of a faded feather. Then she would endeavour to seduce us by sweet promises, not that they came forth with "honeyed utterance," for her voice was strong and deep as the roar of the ocean, as she exclaimed, (shaking up the mysterious little bits of paper,) "Come, try your luck, my pretty little darlings,—all prizes and no blanks—here's the shop to make your fortune at once, and all for the risking of a penny; and should you not like the prize, by putting it back, you can try your luck again." Then we used to lay our little heads together, and wonder if prizes for all the things which were displayed on that stall were in the "lucky bag." Then some little urchin, who had been hovering round all day, would blithely tell us how he had seen a tall man in a velvet coat, with a black eye, a pipe in his hat, and a bull-dog at his heels, and how the said gentleman came up and paid his penny and dipped his hand in the lucky bag. How, strange to tell, the first time he put in he won that rosewood work-box, (the only one on the stall,) and, which seemed more marvellous, how the woman gave him five shillings to leave it behind, and thanked him kindly for so doing, declaring also to the crowd around her, that should any other gentleman or lady win it, she would give them the choice between that or five shillings, and that—wonderful to relate,—although upwards of thirty had tried their luck, and one persevering fellow had spent half-a-crown, no one had gained a higher prize than a penny trumpet. Then we would try our fortune, big with hope, that the rosewood work-box would be ours; and the deep-voiced woman made our hearts quake as she ran her eye over the ticket, and exclaimed aloud, "A row of pins for the gentleman to pin up his sweetheart's gown in rainy wea-

ther;" or, perhaps, "A whistle for the young gentleman to call out his sweetheart on a moonlight night;" or, haply, "A stay-lace for the young man, that he may make a present to his sweetheart when he goes a-courting;" then we went sneaking off amid the laughter of the bystanders, with head half averted, casting many a longing look on the rosewood work-box. We passed the white cocks and black cocks, and disregarded the cry of the old veteran, who with a husky voice exclaimed, "Here they are and no gammon; you have only to turn a time or two on this table to get rich — black against white, and white against black — come here, if you want to fill your pockets with money." We pricked once or twice in the garter, and although the man was kind enough to let us see him roll it up, and even once smiled when we said we knew we had pricked in the loop, yet, somehow or other, we always managed to lose. We fared no better among the thimble-rig gentry, although one of them gave us the wink to bet that the pea was under the thimble nearest him, and even when we had lost our sixpence said, "Never mind,—'faint heart never won fair lady;' better luck next time."

Then we had a "shy" at the snuff-boxes and knives, which were planted on the tops of tall sticks, and although they looked as if a gust of wind would blow them down, yet, by some sad mischance, the prizes always fell into the holes; and the old sailor, who had two wooden legs, went stumping about in triumph, and rolling the large quid in his cheek, while he exclaimed, "Miss my pins and hit my shins, and try your luck again," and out of sheer revenge we shyed the last stick at his "timber-toes," whereat he laughed louder than ever, and began to count his halfpence.

Our attention was next drawn to a hole-and-corner sort of an establishment, which looked as if we might de-

pend upon finding tragedy performed there upon the most primitive principles. The heavy-murderers moved along carefully outside, not taking too long strides, for there was not room enough in their garments to admit of any violent exertion. The queens and the high-born damsels also seemed to partake of the hang-dog look of the heroes, and whether their head-dresses sat ill or their crowns were placed awry, we could hardly make out, but their fingers were constantly busy there ; arranging, and shifting, and turning over their silken ringlets, as if they were ill at ease.

One old man seemed to have grown grey in playing the ghost. I could be sworn that I had seen him murdered a score times—" stabbed through and through ;" it was no treat to see him killed again ; he had become so used to it, that he could lie down and die with as much ease as a gentleman deposits his body in bed, nor would he rest until he had found out the softest spot on the board ; as a boy once said, " He would die like winking."

We ascended the steps and paid one penny, then threaded our way through heavy-tragedy men and light-comedy women : one of our party, who had taken his stand beneath the candles, found himself suddenly crowned, without his own consent ; " glory and *grease*" did he win unsought for, as the rim in which half a score candles were blazing descended, and just fell " all round his hat," investing it with a halo of light.

We saw a plumed warrior stalk up to a lady fair, and bent our ears, expecting that he would at least accost her in the language of the drama—tell her that his barbed steed already neighed by the barbican—that he should turn his head when he gained the skirts of the forest, and look for her white favour waving from the ivied turret. But not

so ; he stepped up with folded arms, and said, " Remember, Nan, that I put down three half-pence for you towards that last half-pint of gin." And she, — oh, ye gods ! — put her hand into her bosom, and from a piece of brown paper pulled out a hard black common copper penny, and gave it him, saying, " You must trust me the odd halfpenny." I could be sworn that it was the very penny she took from a sweep while the money-taker's back was turned, and to think of placing it where only doves, and loves, and roses, and posies,—foh !

" Oh, her offence was rank !"

We fled into the interior: the drop-scene was down ; it represented a street, without any perspective ; the houses were piled one upon another, and the passengers placed between the roof of the one row and the base of the other. The candle-snuffer had no instrument saving his fingers, and when burnt, he invariably, after having shaken them, thrust them into his mouth. Some of the candles were at all angles, reposing lovingly upon each other, and dropping down fatness upon the shoulders of the assembly ; nor did the decapitator of luminaries pay much attention as to where he shook off the burning snuff from his fingers, so that there was a gathering of garments wherever he moved. At length the audience become impatient, and began to call aloud for the performance to commence—they stamped also with their feet—but as we all stood alike upon our mother earth, they made but little noise, and the man with " burning fingers " turned round and said, " The more row you chaps kicks up here, why we shall just be all that the longer afore we begins,—that's all, my kiddies."

At length a man thrust his head and arms through the midst of the drop scene and drove the street each way, half the houses to the ri ht and half to the left : from the noise mad-

we concluded it moved upon a rod and rings, much like the old-fashioned untheatrical bed-curtains. This done, he laid himself down upon some ragged drapery which had once been red, and looking into the side wings said, "What the deuce did you tell me to shove the curtain away for, before you was ready?" He then lay down, and was of course fast asleep, when we, who were close to the stage, saw a woman leap upon it, much after the manner we should get upon a table; she then knelt beside the sleeping man and spake something about "a lonely cavern, and his murderers so near;" then she looked aside to another, who was pinning an old cloak around her and said, "Come, I'm not a-going to kneel here all night;" and the woman who was to be the witch of the cave answered, "I shall be ready in about a minute;" then the kneeling lady arose and said, "I shall not wait any longer," so she placed her hands on the edge of the stage, and jumped off, and the other climbed on. While she was repeating something over the slumberer, he exclaimed, "Cut it short, or Bill will be here with the gin." Meantime another had very carefully climbed upon the stage, as if he had suffered from rashly leaping thereon, as a long line of white stitches upon a black ground plainly showed; he never once was so ill mannered as to turn his back upon the audience. He was smoking a very short black pipe in the wings, and when it was his turn to appear, he stuck the dudeen under his belt, and drew out an old white-hafted knife, and when he was about to stab the sleeper, the old man who had played the ghost for a score of years, jumped up on the other side, with a very dirty sheet over him; then the man who had been smoking went on one side and the ghost on the other, and the street was drawn back to its old place, and that was the first act.

Bill also came in with the gin, so that, anticipating it would be some time before the street was again removed, we

sallied forth in quest of further amusement, and halted before a mountebank company, where a German Doctor was extolling his medicines before a gaping crowd, which, whether they admired the two large painted globes, the snake, the crocodile, or the garrulous doctor himself, it was impossible to tell; however, they all paid the utmost attention while listening to his wonderful cures. A woman with a rubicund countenance, that looked as if it had caught the hue of the brandy in which it had a thousand times been mirrored, sat beside a table, in readiness to be consulted by the fair sex, in either matters of medicine, fortune telling, or interpreting dreams. Nay, it was a doubt if any question could be asked that either herself or husband could not answer, especially if it was seconded with a shilling. The mountebank announced his medicines as follows:—

"The first thing I have to offer to your notice," said he, holding up a handful of little pamphlets, "is my True Family Adviser, which will show the best time to cut hair, how moles and dreams are to be interpreted — when it is most proper to be bled—under what aspect of the moon it is best to draw teeth, cut corns, and pare nails, to graft, plant, innoculate, open bee-hives, and kill swine. Also various recipes for washes for removing freckles, love-powders, and instructions how to turn the hair any colour the purchaser pleases, shape the eye-brows to any form, and make low foreheads as high as you like. I have an elixir for deafness, and any persons taking it, though they were so deaf as not to hear the report of an eighteen pounder though fired off within fifty yards of them, would afterwards be enabled to hear a star fall, though at ever so great a distance. I have also on sale the 'Constitutional Almanack,' which will show when the purchaser will become ill, and what his diseases will be, during the next seven years.

"In boxes, at one shilling each, may be bought, my cele-

brated ' Levelling Pills,' which, if a person's face, through the small pox, looks like the map of Wales, with all the hills and valleys in it, will in the course of a few doses make it all as level as a bowling-green.

" To those who attend churches, chapels, or such like meetings, I strongly recommend my Pills of Worship, which will prevent all that wheezing, coughing, and barking which you hear more of than the sermon, especially in winter. Some old man begins the harmony, it runs along by the communion-table; east coughs against west, and the south aisle against the north aisle; you lose all the parson's quotations, which cost him so much labour — even the clerk's responses are drowned by it. Now to prevent all this, take my Pills of Worship, and whether you stand up to the chin in water for a fortnight, or fall asleep in the fields in a shower, it will make no difference, for I will forfeit my reputation if ever you cough again. Nor must I forget to mention my Divulging Drops, one drop of which taken in a glass of ale or wine, which may be slipped in unseen, will cause the persons who take it to confess all they know, and all of good or evil they intend doing.

" Some of the cures which I have performed I shall state with all possible modesty. I cured one James Gabble, who was always talking, even in his sleep, and one William Still, who scarcely spoke a word in a month ;—this I did by transferring a portion of the blood of one into the other, and performed so perfect a cure, that William Still sometimes talks, and James Gabble sometimes holds his tongue. Also Dinah Frail, who was so given to speak evil language, that she would curse over grace, and storm over prayers, although she had been piously brought up, fed by the ' Crumbs of Comfort,' and lulled to sleep with Wesley's Hymns. In a week I so far cured her that she left off ' The Rigs of Barley ' and ' Whistle and I'll come to thee, my Lad ;' and in place

of these got an evening hymn, grace before and after meat, and two of the commandments.

"I cured a celebrated physician who was troubled with a longing to write prescriptions to such a monstrous degree, that he wrote bills by the yard, and prescribed medicines by the hogshead and wheelbarrow-full at a time. Now he writes but three words, prescribes but two scruples, leaves his patients to a wholesome kitchen-diet, has ruined the sexton and the undertaker, and the over-stocked parish has petitioned parliament to send out a new colony to either the upper or lower world.

"But the most miraculous cure that I ever wrought was on Obadiah Flemming, who dwelt at All-hallows, Barking, and had such a terrible cough upon him that no one in the house could sleep for a fortnight. After having given him a couple of bushels of my long coughing pills without effecting a remedy, I all at once discovered that he never could be cured while he bore that name, or lived in that parish, for Flemming brought on the cough, and Barking continued it. I therefore removed him to Ambleside, and called him Bowman, and, although he became a little lame, I perfectly cured his cough.

"Nehemiah Drowsy, the ranters' parson, was so afflicted with a lethargy that he would sometimes fall asleep while ascending the pulpit stairs, drop into a sound slumber while giving out his text, and snore, until the chapel shook, in the midst of his sermon. By taking my 'Wide-awake' pills he is now enabled to preach at the camp-meeting a whole week without sleeping—read the whole of Lady Dash's poetry without a nod, and every line of Lord Twaddledum's novels without a yawn. Nay, it is averred that he got through a work, which five hundred people had attempted in vain to read, and which it was considered impossible for any man to do although he possessed the patience of Job, the constitu-

tion of Samson, and the age of Methuselah; but this he did through my 'Wide-awake Pills,' and a few puff powders, without once sleeping.

"But these things," continued he, "may not be quite so well understood among you as my fly-powders, cough drops, and worm cakes, which, for the small charge of one shilling per packet, will kill, cure, and lengthen life."*

Without testing the virtues of his medicines, we travelled on further in search of new amusement.

We entered the village ale-house, and our attention was soon called to a group who sat together discussing their own particular merits under the inspiring influence of home-brewed ale and good strong shag tobacco, the effects of which were already visible on some of the party.

"I mean to say," said one, "that my ploughing 's as straight as an arrow: look at our home-close, as the schoolmeaster once said, anybody might rule book-lines by the furrows."

"I don't care what you may say, Bill," said another rustic; "I'll allow you're a devilish pretty plougher, but you mun admit as proof of the pudding lies in the eating on it, and you know I carried away the prize from all the three parishes, and would again if I might only have Dobbin and Mayflower in yoke."

"I 'm only a lad," said a third, "but I'll plough you for a goden ginny, or mow or shear you, ather: didn't I keep first all last harvest, when we were mowing land for land?"

"Hey!" said a fourth, "you did keep first, I'll warrant you; but how did you do it? Why, you took all the narrowest outside lands, an' as farmer Tong said, left as much i' th' furrows as would make bread for half the village for a year to come. Didn't th' gleaners allos say, 'Oh! I'll glean

* For the original of the Mountebank's Speech, see Tom Brown's Works, vol. ii.

after him, he makes sich good gleaning.' No, no, John, tho' you're stronger and longer-reached than I am, you can't load hay wi' me. Who stood it longest when you an' your feather was wi' us frae three i' the morning till ten at night? Did I ever lay down upon the waggon, and cry done first, he? No, no, Jack, you niver found Ned a flincher."

"I don't care, Ned," said the other, "what you say, but when we were draining the grange lands, and had to make the lower drain eight feet deep, all heavy clay, wasn't you forced to take half-spade fulls at last, because you couldn't throw out whole ones?"

"I can mow an acre a day," said another, "and have done when I was with Farmer Jobson."

"That ar'n't true!" shouted several.

"Isn't it, Bill? I'm man enough for yo any day: come on, I'm yore customer in ony ground in England."

"If yo mean ought, Ned, turn out an' I'll fight yo for pure love."

"I've hed enough o' your lip, an' if you'll stan' up, I'll just teck a little conceit out o' yo."

"Come on, then: Isaac — you'll see fair play. If I hit you fair, I'll send yo into the middle o' next week!"

"Will you? but when I hit you I'll meck you believe a horse kicked you!"

The uproar increased, hats and coats were thrown on the floor, chairs and tables hurled in every direction; pipes, pitchers, and glasses were no more, for many a heavy hand had "struck flat their *thin* rotundity!" Peeping above the long-settle was the time-wrinkled phiz of mine hostess, "flashing battle from her eyes," and exclaiming, in a shrill treble, "Who's to pay me for my glasses, an' my best blue and white jugs? Betty! Betty! fetch constable Jerroms."

"He's gone to bed drunk holf a hour sin," answered

Betty, who was in the midst of the fray, clawing Ned's face like a cat for making her sweetheart's nose bleed.

"Soldiers! soldiers!" screamed the old woman; "I pay excise, and I discharge you in King George's name to coom an make peace."

"Let 'em fight it out if they like it!" shouted the military from the parlour, who scorned to interfere in the private quarrels of any gentlemen.

"O you lobster rogues!" shrieked the old woman, "so you would see all my property destroyed, would you, you warmin? Help! help! they'll knock my house down. Ned—Bill—Jack—Isaac—Joe—Dick—are you going to knock one another o' the head, all about your silly ploughing? Help! help!"

Bill's elbow had twice tried the strength of the old woman's window, and left her minus two panes, which could not be replaced without sending five miles for a glazier. King Charles's twelve good rules had fallen from the wall in the fray, and, as Jack took it up in his anger, to try the strength of Ned's skull, the first blow proved the old picture to be the softest by opening its long-preserved front to admit the turnip-like rotundity of Ned's head, and hanging around his neck, to the great annoyance of his rival's knuckles. Pilgrim's Progress shared a similar fate, being trampled and broken beneath their nailed shoes. Here lay "Doubting Castle" under the long-settle, while the "Slough of Despond" was buried among the ashes, and the "Delectable Mountains" scattered like ant-hills. Dick had cut his elbow by falling on a broken glass, while Isaac sat bellowing like a bull, for during the contest his feet had intruded themselves under the grate, from whence issued a red-hot cinder, which had planted itself on his leg, leaving a vacuum in his ribbed stockings, with further inroads. Ladles, warming-pan,

bright copper sauce-pans, and numerous cooking utensils, together with a row of goodly brass candlesticks which decorated the mantel-piece, lay crushed and indented on every hand. O, Betty! had'st thou but dared to have left one of those shining vessels out of its place, or to have hung one an hair's breadth awry, the shrill trebles of Mother Ward would have rewarded the misdemeanor by scattering around the opprobrious epithets of "careless slut," "slovenly hussey," "dirty trollop," "saucy trull," with many other words of "linked sweetness long drawn out."

But there they lay, the bright effects of many a heavy hour's scouring, trampled, bruised, soiled, lidless, handleless, and shapeless? At length the tumult ceased; shaking of hands was also over, while many a brow still bore the marks of those "deeds in battle doomed," for here a cut cheek bore for a plaster a portion of the print of Pilgrim's Progress, where the way-worn wanderer was climbing up the Hill Difficulty. Even the "golden rules" were all broken.

Such was the scene when in staggered Jack Straw, rolling drunk, with the serjeant's cap on, singing—

> "If I had a beau for a soldier would go,
> Do you think I'd say no? No! not I;
> Not a sigh would I draw, when his red coat I saw,
> But a cheer I'd give for his bravery."

"What! have yo' listed, Jack?" interrogated half a dozen voices in as many tones.

"I have, my lads," answered he singing—"'And I never will follow the plough tail again.' I 've listed for a hofficer, an' if any o' yo's a mind to list wi' me (hiccup), I'll gi' yo' a shilling in his majester's name an' list you for full sargent."

"You mean full private," said an old man, who had hitherto sat unobserved in the corner; "you mean full private,

same as they' ll make you when they get you up to th' regiment. I once listed thirty years ago for a colonel, and when I got up to th' regiment, and I told 'em what I'd listed for, they laughed at me, and says yo're above a colonel; so I was above one, for our colonel only stood five feet five, and I stood near upon six feet, so they made me a grenadier."

"I don't care," answered Jack Straw, "I took his majester's money to be a hofficer (hiccup), an' be one I will, or else I'll not sarve according to the articals o' war. 'Now,' says I, afore I took the money, 'sargent,' says I, 'I list for an hofficer.' 'Yes,' says he; 'will you be captain, lieutenant, or ensign?' 'Ensign,' says I. 'Very well,' says he, and he put it down in black and white; you may go into the parlour and ax him;" and away we went, John Straw, ensign, leading the way.

In the parlour all was confusion: a good-looking rosy-cheeked girl was pulling at the arm of her drunken lover and exclaiming, "Dinna list, Tommy, dinna list; o' yo'll brake my heart: dinna list him, Mr. Soldier."

"I will list," said the rough rustic; "give me a shilling to sarve his most gracious majester Mr. King William: I'll not be a clod-hopper all the born days of my life, and put up we your ons and offs."

"Oh! dinna list him, Mr. Sargent!" exclaimed the girl, "for his poor old mother would run stark mad if he was to go for a soldier, and I'm sure I dare not show my face at hoam wehout him. His mother 's sure to lay all the blame on me, and say as he listed for love, and then what ever am I to do?"

"I'll not list him while he 's tipsy," replied the sergeant, saying a thousand pretty things to the distressed damsel, and accompanying every sentence with a knowing twinkle of the eye. By the aid of another maiden, however, the drunken swain was led off, and on throwing up the parlour-window

we could perceive him and his sweetheart in the garden, she promising not to see Fred Giles again, upon condition that he no more whistled out Squire Thornton's dairy-maid.

The sergeant still continued exhibiting his long purse, and pointing out the happiness of a soldier's life, while many a country bumpkin sat glowing beneath the sunny beams of imaginary glory, and old Mother Ward's sparkling ale.

"Think but for a moment," exclaimed the sergeant, in the true "Ercles' vein," "of being exposed all the day in a hay-field, sweating beneath a scorching sun, until at night you 're all as tired as dogs, while the soldier sits in his shady barracks, enjoying all manner of happiness, such as sleeping, smoking, or drinking. Then think of the chance of being promoted to an officer! Beside, there 's no work to do; there 's nothing after you've learnt your exercise but to keep yourself clean, and walk about all day like a gentleman. Then there 's the bounty, look at that (and down went his pur e upon the table); then again think of the honour of fighting for your king and country, and if you happen to have your leg shot off (here two or three winced), why, you 've bread for life in a good pension. There's prize-money too, and all the honour of saying you've been in such a battle, and if you go abroad, there's wine at a penny a quart; think of that, you rogues!— and you've no horse to look after like a horse-soldier, nought but a knapsack and firelock. — Who would follow the plough when he can march beneath the glorious colours of the 42nd, to the merry fife and drum! and have plenty of sweethearts in every town, and money without working for it — eh, eh, my brave countrymen?"

"And who the devil," said the old man who had once listed for a colonel, "will take thirteen-pence a day to be shot at, eh? and have about twenty masters over him, eh?

First comes a lance Jack, — ' If you don't stir yourself, I'll report you to the coporal ;' then comes the puppy of a corporal,—' If you don't mind, I'll lodge a complaint to the sergeant ;' then the sergeant,—' Sir, you'll chance to see the black-hole, if you are not more attentive ;' then there 's drill—' Hold your head up, or I'll put you in the awkward squad ;' then another peeping down your gun-muzzle, and examining you from head to foot, to see that everything 's in apple-pie order, beside as many sorts of officers as there are weeds in our common. Hey, hey, my lads, soldiering 's all very well to talk about, but you no sooner are one than you've had a bellyful. Be content where you are ; if you don't like your master now, you can soon get another ; but as for promotion, if you ever get up its to th' *holberts*, where they once promoted me, only for staying out we my lass after th' trumpet had sounded for all in ;—what d'ye think o' that for promotion ?"

The sergeant muttered something about desertion and backscratching, and we retired up stairs to join the dancers.

To " gie the music," was the charge of old Markham, a man who had grown grey in the merry service of feasts and wakes. He was the very prince of country fiddlers, he played only English tunes, and would sing none other than English songs. Oh ! how he hated the sallow Frenchman, who came round with bills, and announced, that twice a week he should give lessons on dancing. What an innovation on old Markham ! what need of a new dancing master while old Markham was alive? he who had taught the whole country for twenty miles around, who gave us lessons at the Old Blue Bell every year a fortnight before the feast, and taught us how to toe and heel, for one penny per night, and always advised us to have our shoes well nailed that he might hear us stamp to time ; old Markham who could fiddle after having drunk ten pints of ale, and was never known

to stop the dance, not even when he had broken two of his strings! Who like him at "Bob and Joan," and the "Bonny Rigs of Barley!" A Frenchman? pho! could any Frenchman play "The Cuckoo's Nest" for three hours without ceasing, never stopping even to drink, but playing away while another held the tankard to his lips? What Frenchman ever had such a music book as old Markham?—a regular heir-loom. Markham was born a fiddler! and, as he was wont to say, came into the world with a fiddle in his hand. Who beside him could play, "Will you go to Flanders, my Molly O!" or "Over a Whinney Whinney Weg;" "The Babes in the Wood;" "Broom, broom, on the high hill O!" "Bonny lass on yonder green;" "Tom loved Mary passing well;" "By a bank as I lay;" "Come, live with me and be my love?" Talk of Handel or Hayden, old Markham would out have fiddled them both and given them three strings. Besides, had he not led at our church! what if he did step from the "Old Hundred" to "God save the King," did it not show his loyalty? And when he was sent for to the hall to give the young squire lessons, what if he contrived to burn the "Hunting Chorus," because it was not English music,—did he not make out a copy of "Tom Moody," and swear that his fiddle could not play foreign tunes? No one ever found any outlandish phrases in old Markham's music book, no allegro, or moderato, or sinfonia andante, or adagio: did you want time, it was written "count five," or any specified number: "over again," and "over quicker," and "pretty brisk," and "just middling," and "not too fast," were such marks as his grandfather had used: true, there were a few such additions as "very tenderly," and "rather melancholy," or "briskish," "lively, "Psalmish-like," and "solemn;" albeit that after these there came whole lines of "fa lal lal las," and "derry downs," without end. A fine fiddler was old Markham, and

only let anybody say he had a superior, and, by the mass, a score of coats would come off to fight for him. There he sat in his glory, scraping away with all his strength, and stamping his foot to time. Away we went, to a tune which had no variations, as hard as we could stamp upon the wooden floor. "O dear! the music 's ceased. What's the matter?" "Why, Enoch Tomson 's trodden on my toes wi' his nailed boots, and he knows I've only got my thin sarc'net slippers on — a brute! I'll not dance wi' him no longer —I'll dance wi' you, Tom." And away we went once more, but without any music. "What's the matter, Markham — why don't you play, man?"

"Play the devil," answered cat-gut; "while you were bothering about your nang-nails some mischievous thief run a candle across my fiddle-bow, an' it won't speak."

"We can't wait," was the answer, so away we went to the whistling, clapping of hands and halloing of the farmers, when, in an instant, all was dark; still the dancing continued, although first one and then another came in contact, and measured their lengths upon the floor. All was uproar and mistake. "Who's pulling my frock? Polly, is that you?" "Be quiet, Bill." "Where 's my bonnet?" "Misses Ward, bring a light." "I can't get in; somebody 's fastened the door." "Who's got my fiddle?" until at length lights were procured, and the dance was once more restored.

While we were in the highest glee, old Lance Pindar entered the room, striking his huge black-thorn walking stick upon the floor at every stride, and muttering something to himself.

"What 's the matter, Lance?" inquired half a score, in eager haste, who were conscious, from the natural evenness of Lance's good temper, that something uncommon had occurred.

"Matter! matter enough, marry is there," said Lance; "the truth is I'm devilish mad, an not wi'hout a cause."

"But what 's the matter?" again inquired the interested group.

"Why," said Lance, "I'll just tell you — you all know John Goy's mare?—Well, she 's allos been reckoned a good un' at carrying double; so to-day, bein' a bit of a holiday, I says to my old woman, 'Deborah,' says I, 'I'll just step down to John Goy's an' hire his mare to-day, as my old Ball won't carry double, an' we'll ride as far as Martin.' 'Do, my lad,' says she, an' accordingly I went, and got the pillion seat, an' everything comfortable. Well, do you know, we hadn't ridden far afore that old thief of a mare (God forgive me for saying so!) laid down her ears, kicked up her heels, an' throwed me an' my old woman in a dike, then started off back an' left us to it. Well, you know, I got up, got my old dame out o' th' dike, rubbed her clean wi' some grass, then went to give John Goy a devilish good blowing up. Well, an' wot do you think? why, he swore that as I hired th' mare I should pay for her for all th' journey. I swore I'd see him hanged first, and so we got to high words — I swore I wouldn't pay, and he swore I should. Well, you know, what does I do, but I goes to our Lawyer Seizall's, an' knocks at th' door—so a woman comes. 'If you please,' says I, 'is Measter Lawyer Seizall in?' 'No,' says she. 'Is Misses Lawyer Seizall in?' says I. 'Yes,' says she, 'I am her.' 'Well, then,' says I, 'supposing yo' was John Goy's mare, an' I hired you to teck me an' my old woman a long journey—well, an' yo' tuck it into your hed to throw us both in a dike, afore we'd got hofe-a-mile, do you think, now, I'd be sich a fool as to pay for you? — no, I'd see you hanged first.' Well, do yo' know, she burst out a laughing at me and made me madder."

We all did the same, and out he bounced, stamping his

feet, and striking his stick fiercely upon the ground, and calling us unfeeling "robbers of righteousness," and damning John Goy and his mare all the way he went. It was past midnight, when one of the rustics stole out to the next room, and returned with a pillow; this was the signal for a cushion dance, well understood in our county, and old Markham instantly struck up the tune of

"Old John Walker had a wife," etc.

When the bearer of the pillow had made two or three circuits round the room, he threw it down at the feet of his partner, on which the blushing damsel was obliged (according to the rules of cushion-dance) to kneel and receive her swain's salute, the fiddle screaming out all the time on the shrill string. Away they again went round the room, he holding by her white frock and she bearing the pillow, which she at length threw down at the feet of another girl. "A fine, a fine," was the cry; "she must deliver it to some young man." Here Jack Straw pushed forward, but he was not the man. Just at that moment Sammy the waiter entered, with his red hair shining like a fire, and down went the pillow at Sammy's feet. "O deary me, miss, O locky daisy me!" said Sammy, and while in the act of kneeling, he received a little uncalled for help behind, which brought his nose in contact with the floor; however, he managed to go through the ceremony. Away capered Sammy with the pillow in his hand; then looking round for the prettiest face, threw it down, and took his tribute, much to the horror of the damsel. It was now another's turn to make choice, when up came Mother Ward, sixty-three, without a tooth in her head. Just as the old woman had delivered a glass of liquor, he threw the pillow at her feet, when down stairs she ran, without once pausing for pay. After her flew the pillow, and after the pillow we all rushed; and not thinking

about the stairs, down we went, sorely to the discomfiture of our elbows and knees. From this we soon recovered, and, on looking once more round the room, I perceived the Johnny and Molly seated together who had first attracted our attention, when buying the "gress-green riband;" he was now accommodated with a "sewgar bruster." Without further ceremony I threw down the pillow at Molly's feet.

"Molly," said the jealous swain, "if yo' gi' that chap a buss, he may teck yo' for altogether, for I'll none o' you."

"O thou jealous fool," answered the polite maiden, "I reckon I can buss thee after, and thou can buss another."

"Hey, hey, I'd forgot that," said he, and in another minute she threw the pillow at Johnny's feet.

"Ay, my wench," said he, as he threw his arms round her head,—neck she appeared to have none—"I do luv yo' sum." Away we went in a string, until none remained who had not gone through the ceremony, saving Old Markham: the last who had taken up the pillow was Betty the servant, and not wishing to be disappointed she threw it at the fiddler's feet. Cat-gut now led the way fiddling down stairs with the pillow under his arm, we followed *en masse* into the parlour, when it was thrown at the feet of mine hostess, and on it she condescended to kneel and finish the cushion dance. It was then broad day-light, and those who had sweethearts wandered into the flowery lanes and fields, while mine hostess prepared breakfast, being what she termed "a finish to the feast."

Jack Straw went for a soldier, "all becos Jemima had used him cruelly," and she was shortly married to him whom she had so often met by moonlight beneath the trysting tree. Lance Pindar and John Goy have long since been friends; but when in their cups they do not forget the old mare; Molly and Johnny were married at Michaelmas, as he promised, and she yet wears the "hofe yode of gress-green ri-

band" for cap-strings; but what is stranger than all, the old fiddler is landlord of the "Blue-bell," having married mine hostess, who still mourns for the loss of King Charles's good Rules and Pilgrim's Progress, as they were her grandmother's, and declares she "will never expose any more valuable pictors at a feast."

THE OLD WOODMAN.

> Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
> The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
> And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
> From morn to eve his solitary task.
>
> COWPER.

AT the very base of Warton Woodhouse stands the cottage of Abraham Clark, the old woodman. There is something in the appearance of this dwelling which seems to accord with his solitary habits, and that habitual loneliness which is ever around him, for situated as it is at the termination of a deep valley, which in former times is said to have formed the bed of the river, there is a picturesque dreariness about it which is almost fearful. Many a long year has old Abraham lived alone in that cottage, and it seems to have been almost his constant study to bring home only those plants from the wood which grow dark and green, and close together, and resemble those shadowy recesses in the greenwood in which he labours. Evergreens are there of almost every variety that can be found within an English forest, and thus throughout the year the old man dwells amid deep foliage, either in the wood or amongst that which surrounds his own hut.

A staid and solemn man is Abraham Clark, for he has dwelt so long with solitude that they have become companions, and his countenance has caught the brown hue of the trees, and his garments are also coloured like their stems; so that

when he stands motionless amongst them, a stranger would pass by without distinguishing him from the grey and moss-covered trunks. Did he not throw off his garments every evening, I verily believe that they would become overgrown with moss or lichen, from the grey and green to the silver-white and all those hues with which the stems are decorated. Morning and night does he pursue the same path, to and fro, without change; the very post by the stile on which he has placed his hand so often in climbing over, is worn bright again by his hard palm. He is more familiar with the appearances of the trees than with the faces of mankind; the very form of some of their branches has become imprinted on his eye, through having nodded to him in the wind for so many years. The knots on many of the boles have to him distinct features—he sees faces in them every morning, and never passes by without glancing at them; they were first created by his fancy, and never can he get rid of these shapes, unless the trees themselves are hewn down, or the marks at least defaced by the axe.

I have often wondered to myself, what are the thoughts of old Abraham while he is working alone in those woods; he knows nothing of the creations of Ariosto, never heard of the "Flower and the Leaf," saving as they appear to his eye; would take Una and her milk-white lamb for some silly shepherdess, and the melancholy Jacques for a jack-an-apes. But although the old Woodman is unacquainted with the poets, yet is he familiar with almost every passage of Scripture that speaketh of trees, from the tree of knowledge to those mentioned in Christ's parables. Abraham Clark is a pious man.

I forget what poet it is who says, "old age is gloomy and dark;" but when a man like Abraham has outlived his wife and children, has no one to smile upon him on his return home, nothing but those gloomy evergreens to meet his eye,

and the whole of his days spent in those silent woods, what marvel that he is a man of few words. True he has a dog, that looks as old and sober as himself, that follows in his track with downcast head, seldom either deviating to the right hand or the left; he seems to do nothing all the livelong day but sleep upon his master's coat. The sound of the old Woodman's axe sends him asleep; there is something in the eternal "hack, hack, hack," so congenial to slumber that, when the noise ceases, he uplifts his heavy head, and half-opening his dreamy eyes, looks round in wonder at the silence which has awakened him.

The wood is to Abraham the world, and doubtless the trees, in his eyes, resemble its inhabitants; his daily occupation makes him a kind of ruler amongst them, and I doubt not but that they furnish him with much matter for contemplation. I cannot imagine a studious old man like him felling a beautiful healthy young tree, without comparing its fate to those who are cut down in the bloom of life, "with all their blushing honours thick upon them," and fancying how goodly they might have grown had they but been allowed to remain. The old trees also, those that are all but dead, and only put out a few dwindled leaves here and there at the end of summer,—no doubt while looking upon such as those, old Abraham has thought of that tenacity with which the grey-headed and bow-bent still cling to life. Then to see him pile up the chips and the bark, placing them one on the right hand and the other on the left —aye! he was thinking then on the great divisions which will take place at last, and dividing them into the sheep and the goats. Then there are the branches, those which are straight and may be appropriated to some use, and those which are only fit for fuel; yes, the best of them are ready to be gathered into some garner or shelter, and the others are tossed and bundled roughly together "to be cast into the

flames." The falling leaves too, doubtless they give rise to many a solemn thought; while those which still remain are by him watched daily until he grows familiar with their every change, and peradventure can tell which next will be borne over the sylvan footpaths.

There is a smell of forests about the old man—his duck frock has caught the aroma of trees, and his hat, what with rubbing it against the green stems, and browning it by the summer sun, seems to have held a long contest, whether or not it should wear the hue of the brown bark, or the greenery of the foliage. He always sits upon some fallen trunk to take his food, and closes his eyes, and spreads out his hands to invoke a blessing before he lifts the morsel to his lips. Abraham never yet had to make a display of his piety before man. He is, however, very superstitious, and believes that there are sights and sounds in the woods which there is no accounting for; that there is some connexion between the living and the trees which are to form their last "narrow home;" that such timber as is destined to build a church grows more silent than any other, and is less subject to be moved by the tempests; that murder has some time or other been committed on those dark spots in the forest which are black and barren, and produce neither flower nor weed.

But these things had sprung from his moody habits; he had been nurtured in a sullen school, had heard but little language saving the sounds of the woodlands, now and then broken or strengthened by the deep moaning of the winds, and the clashing of branch against branch. His very calling had rendered him almost unsusceptible of tender emotions, for from his youth his had been a stern task, dealing heavy blows upon the sturdy stems of trees; waging war, as it were, against the stubborn giants of the forest; and had it not been for his Bible and his domestic suffering, Abraham Clark would perchance

have been a savage man. Nor were those all the wild and superstitious fancies which he indulged in. He believed that apparitions and spirits were more numerous in England when the kingdom contained large forests; and did you but chance to dream of trees, no one could interpret them better than Abraham. He always decked his hut with holly and ivy at Christmas, and preserved a portion of the last year's yule-clog, to light the new one with. He had a horse-shoe nailed to his threshold, to keep out the witches. He believed the *ignis fatuus*, or Jack with a lantern, to be none other than a destructive fiend, who, although himself invisible, carried a light to allure travellers into bogs and rivers; and advised those who might be led away with it, to stop, shut their eyes, and repeat a prayer—when the light would vanish! He is a believer in fairies, and thinks that they never approach towns, but confine themselves solely to the woods and forests, and vanish at the sound of mortal footsteps. Then he has an hundred old-fashioned notions, which no reasoning can ever erase, such as a belief that mandrakes grow under a gibbet-post, and the root shrieks whenever it is torn up, and that whoever destroys them dies soon after; that to kill a swallow is unlucky, and forebodes a bad summer; and to tread upon a sun-clock, is sure to bring on rain, with many another old superstition full of tenderness and mercy.

After all the cold and solitude that the old man endures, his is a much happier life than that of the poor mechanic's doomed to labour week after week in some dark garret or cellar in the heart of a huge city. The air of heaven blows freshly and freely around the old man; he sees the changes of the seasons, and inhales the rich fragrance that is borne upon the gentle winds—the sunshine is familiar to his eye, and many a time must his heart beat blithely while he contemplates the beauties of Nature.

What quietude hangs around the old man, what contentment and peace—what knows he of the world! War may shake the distant nations, his own country be in a commotion with political feuds, but they affect not his tranquil haunts— the sound reaches not the depths of his still green woods. He "among the leaves has never known" the "fever and the fret" of cities, has never felt the pangs that chain society together; has never "coined his cheek to smiles," or lowered his voice to affected sympathy. Sorrow he has encountered, but the silence of the forest taught him a deep philosophy, and brought before him the tranquillity of the grave, where the weary shall for ever be at rest. Hopes he had cherished, but they vanished without being fulfilled; so had he seen some goodly tree, the pride of "its place," towering in beauty and promise, all at once change, shake off its beautiful foliage, languish and die. Light of heart had he been, and

> "Tuned his merry throat
> Unto the wild bird's note;"

but his music was drowned with the approaching storm; he had heard the merry birds hush their notes on a sudden, and hide from the gathering tempest, and bury their mirth beneath the clouds, until a new return of sunshine. The flowers of Summer and the foliage of Autumn passed not away without leaving a solemnity upon his mind. He looked upon the nakedness of Winter, as he was wont to look upon his own home, when all that were dear to him had died. He saw the blank space, he missed the green foliage that rustled and made music around him, but he was schooled for the mighty change. Death, however, affected the old man deeply, and he would sit listening to the forest stream that rippled at his feet for hours, seeking for images, and fancies, and soothing thoughts, in the bubble, or the leaf, or the fallen flower that floated by, and shaping the sounds of

the water to his own thoughts, now sweet, now sadly complaining; then thrilling with notes of hope, or murmuring in a melancholy mood, as it struggled away, through the uncertain shadows, dim and mysterious as the great hereafter. Nor can I fancy him wandering through the forest without meeting with a thousand things that recal the changes of life; the passing, for instance, from under a depth of low-browed and thickly interwoven umbrage, which almost shut out the light of heaven, into a broad, open, and sunlit glade, or threading a path velvet-soft with the springy turf, and emerald-bright with the clearest green grass; then suddenly plunging amid the entangled underwood, briery, bosky, weedy, and withered, and around him that ever-reigning forest silence. What his fancies may be I wot not; but Abraham Clark is not the man to pass by such scenes as these without some thought or other striking him, which accords with the scenery and the silence.

Such a solitary life as Abraham leads would be painful to any other than a man of strong mind; but he is inured to it, was nursed amidst it; from childhood the trees have been his companions, for his father was a woodman before him, and when a boy he often accompanied the old man into the forest, and had his own little axe; — he was born to be a woodman. Solitude, then, is his element; he has sought it with no disgust, derives from it no peculiar pleasure, but that which is drawn from contentment. How would the old man smile to himself were he to hear any one, sick of the vanities of life, envy his condition! Did they but know all he has gone through, how he laboured early and late, when sickness haunted his hearth, from the first peep of the cold grey dawn of winter, when even the birds sat shivering on the naked hedges, to the very darkness of the gusty night, working, as he once expressed it, "until he couldn't see his own hand." Could they know all he has felt amid

those solitudes when he has wandered out to his labour, and left one dear to him hovering between life and death; and he all day working and wondering, and watching omens, and breathing heavily under the imagined misery which his superstitious fancy portrayed. But then he had not fortified his mind with that knowledge which he afterwards gleaned from the Scriptures. He was then a stern man, one who would have either shrunk from or struggled with death; but he carried not his murmurings home; he vented them among the woods, and after-years of deep thought, and silence, brought him stern resignation. His is now no disaffection, no wishing for death; although, in the language of Byron, he might exclaim —

> "'Tis solitude should teach us how to die—
> It hath no flatterers."

Abraham's mind seems to have taken its tinge from the scenes amid which he has dwelt; sometimes it resembles one of his own glades, open, and bright, and sunny; then again it partakes of the darkness of the deepest scenery that surrounds him, is still, and solemn, and unearthly, mingling with superstition and thoughts of death. But over all there hangs a resignation mighty, and deep, and beautiful, as the shadows sleeping upon the forest grass. A stranger would say he was stern, that his aspect was forbidding, that there was something awful in the deep tones of his voice; complain that he spoke not, only to answer their question, and even then in a brief abrupt tone. But let them meet him often, and remember that for years he has had no companions but those hoary trees and his own thoughts; let them catch the sober hues of his mind, send their thoughts into those deep channels into which his own flow, and they will soon find that the old Woodman has

> "Thoughts too deep for tears:"

that he is sensible of the beauty reigning around him, and only looks upon himself as one of his own trees, which must fall whenever the grim woodman, Death, comes with his uplifted axe. His thoughts are mostly of another life; he has outlived all that drew his affections earth-ward, and will hold but little converse on matters that are not as serious as his own nature.

THE COUNTRY JUSTICE.

Then the Justice,
In fair round belly, with good capon lined,
With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut;
Full of wise saws and modern instances.

SHAKSPEARE.

IMPORTANT persons were those Country Justices in the olden time; — men who, like Robert Shallow, Esq. were gentlemen born, and wrote "*armigero* to any bill, warrant, quittance, or obligation;" men whose estates were "goodly and rich;" who had always in readiness "a few young pigeons, or short-legged hens, with a joint or two of mutton," or any other "kickshaw," which William the cook could soon dress; — possessors of fruitful orchards and shady arbours, where they could treat their guests

to " a last year's pipping of their own grafting; with a dish of carraways, and so forth." But we have no Justice Shallows now, who in their younger days " heard the chimes at midnight," sung the tunes that they " heard the carman whistle," and had " lain all night at the Windmill in St. George's Fields;" — perhaps within a few yards of where I am now sitting to write this paper. No! they are gone!—Old Jane Nightwork has also long been dead; she will never again be " angered to the heart" by Robert Shallow, — never more hear the watchword of " Hem! boys," or be knocked up at night to let in the roystering blades of Clement's Inn; old Silence has sung his last song. Time has, however, left their merry doings unimpaired, and their memories will still be fresh and green in the pages of the immortal Shakspeare, when we, who now laugh at their mad pranks, are forgotten.

Then there is old Justice Clement, still sitting in magisterial dignity in the pages of " rare Ben Jonson;" and exclaiming " My chair, sirrah," before proceeding to business. A man who could " smell mischief," and would never be seen without his sword when a soldier appeared before him; who would call for a " bowl of sack," and for a sentence make his prisoner quaff a cup of it; who knew how to teach a knave a trick for saying " he must;" and when the trial was over, was the first to propose that the night should be spent in " love and laughter."

Who that has read " A New Way to Pay Old Debts," can forget Justice Greedy? — that true lover of good living, whose " mouth run over" at the mention of a pipe of rich Canary; who took the cook by the hand, and could give thanks for the " larded pheasant," and was ready to prove that any commission might be put off for a good dinner; who could " even cry" when it was delayed, and would not stir a step without " a corner of that immortal pasty."

He was the man who grew eloquent while describing the "state of a fat turkey;" and all the "grandeur and decorum which he marched with." He "honoured a chine of beef," and "reverenced a loin of veal;"—ate often, and gave thanks, until his "belly was braced up like a drum," and that he "called justice." He raised the very house when the cook refused to stuff the fawn "with a Norfolk dumpling;" and would have gone "stark mad" had he not prevailed upon him to "dish out the woodcocks with toast and butter." Rare fellows were these old Country Justices!

We have in our day had many a "hair-breadth escape" from these surly summoners, when we unconsciously trespassed upon some forbidden ground, or made our way through some huge gap, which the fox-hunter had first burst open. Nay, more than once have we been called upon to find bail for traversing old woods, keeping suspicious-looking dogs, and many other similar misdemeanours, to which we were compelled to plead guilty. Crimes these might be, but they have left no pangs behind; their remembrance awakeneth no pain, nothing but a regret that they cannot be committed again, to bring back all the pleasures of former punishment.

Dear old Justice B——! what a pleasure it was to be summoned before thee!—to look on thy rubicund face and Bardolphian nose — that blazing beacon which was toasted through drinking Tory toasts, and had flamed through fifty elections for town or county. To see thee red with passion, whilst exclaiming, "Silence, sirrah!" and ere thou hadst had a couple of pinches from that old silver snuff-box, turn round and exclaim, "What case next? You may go home, sirrah."

Ah, well did we know the mood that thou wert in by watching the ponderous pigtail which hung half-way down

thy back!—it was the barometer that told the temperature of thy temper; when it was still, it denoted "changeable," in which state it was quite uncertain what weather might next prevail;—when it moved rapidly, or was tossed from one shoulder to the other without cessation, then was it stormy indeed—a complete hurricane—that even shook the powder from thy venerable head;—when it rose and fell gently, and seemed quite in a good humour with itself, like a kitten playing with its own tail, then it was fair, clear, and sunshiny; poacher and trespasser were then liberated, the one with an oath, and the other with a threat. A choleric old fellow wert thou at times; but thy passion was soon over—it never lasted long enough to take hold of thy heart. A staunch pillar wert thou of the church, but thy guinea was ever ready to assist the dissenters; witness that old Sunday school to which I went when a boy.

Terrible threats wert thou wont to thunder forth before the poor beggars that hung around thy gates; but rarely did they ever retire beyond the garden hedge before thy old grey-headed serving-man John, was sent after them with a huge lump of cold meat, a loaf of bread, and a shilling. Strict wert thou in protecting the preserves and warrens of thy neighbours, while we plundered thine own in the open daylight; and had much ado to keep the young rabbits from squeaking in our pockets while we drank the horn of beer before thine own hall door. Thou wouldst ride ten miles at midnight to prevent thy old neighbours from going to law, whilst thou thyself hadst some trial or other at every assize, and wert never known to win a cause. Fond wert thou of committing a man for trespass, but ere he had eaten his fill in thy huge ancient kitchen, thou wouldst step in (and having rapped out a volley of old English oaths), often ordering him another jug of ale, then bid him, "Get home, and see that he let the game alone as he went

through the park." Ever ready wert thou to take our own recognisance for fifty pounds, when all we were masters of were the ugly lurcher at our heels, a hand net with which we plundered thy own fish-ponds, and a few wire snares, in which almost as many of our own mongrels had been hung as we had caught hares on thine own estate; but thou wouldst then take our own word for fifty, readier than another would take our bond. If thou ever hadst a dislike to any one, it was to the radical tailor in the village; still he made all thy garments, and charged thee double the price that another would. "The rascal has a family, and they must live," was thy exclamation;—and so he did, although he had been caught pelting thee at more than one election, and had at the "polling booth" told thee to thy face that he was independent, and needed not the work of any Tory.

Thou wert the very personification of John Bull, the embodiment of the true old English gentleman; body and soul wert thou a Tory, but such a one as even we ragged radicals loved; thou hadst everybody's good word, — ten thousand eyes shed tears for thee when thou wert dead. Brimful wert thou of harmless prejudices and stubborn notions, but they were all English; even in thy very faults there was something to love — in thy greatest absurdities much to admire — in thy errors many a charm. Many a time hast thou been grumbling in thy throat whilst thine heart was planning some kindness; often censuring the culprit with thy tongue when thy hand was grasping his with a friendly clutch that sank to the very soul.

Such men as the Old Justice live nowhere but in England—such hearts beat but rarely in other climes—such bodies are only moulded in British pastures.

Heaven bless thee, my dear country! thy green hills and old woods will be found imprinted upon my heart when I

am dead. I love thee with a fervidness that grows with my growth,—with a passion that can never die. I could be content to wear my immortality for ever in thy sea-girt breast, nor sigh for another heaven. Oh, heart! mayest thou lie cold and senseless ere thy pantings are quickened by the sound of hostile feet! May I be dead ere I hear the thunder of the invader frighting the sweet song-birds from the tranquil forests which I have so long worshipped! Mighty and Unseen Powers, that uphold this green spot aloof, amid a thousand contending billows, cast the proud burden from your sea-green shoulders, and bury it

> "Deeper than did ever plummet sound,"

ere ye permit the foot of a conqueror to tramp on the soil which the spirit of Shakspeare has hallowed! and when in future ages some keel is ploughing the dark waters that have closed over us, then let the mariner point to the gloomy depths and say, "Here stood England, the unconquered!" Stand fast,

> "Thou pale and white-faced shore,
> Whose foot spurns back the ocean's roaring tides,
> And coops from other lands her islanders,"

and on thy frowning front display the warrior forms who shed their blood in thy defence to make thee free. And ye grim "guardian giants that prowl along our coasts," clothe your huge oaken ribs in thunder, and send your deep roar over the desolate sea, until the distant shores turn pale with affright, and whisper each other that "England is again awake!" Oh, that my pen were a thunderbolt! or that I might record my thoughts in blazing characters upon the sky, and utter every word in a peal that would shake my native hills to their very centre; then would I exclaim, "Awake, mightiest of nations, and uphold thy glorious name!"

But mine is a foolish fondness ; — I brood over things which I understand not, and start at shadows which only spring up in my own excited brain, until I hear a war-cry in the wind, and the tramp of the foe in the footfall of the passengers. But who would unurn the gentle Shakspeare ? —what savage Goth would dare to lay his godless hand upon the holy dust that reposes in Westminster Abbey ? —who would touch Milton's hallowed grave, or with sacrilegious grasp scatter the dust of Chaucer and Spenser ? who would carry away our island gods ? No one ! They will slumber in their ancient graves until the last trumpet sounds ; temples will be reared above them when those huge piles that now canopy them have mouldered away. The trophies of the warrior may crumble to dust, but their laurels will be for ever green. War and Vengeance would halt a moment beside their graves, and ere the shock of battle closed, cast a triumphant glance around, as if proud to fall within sight of such hallowed spots. But this is an unnecessary digression, and we will return to our story.

What is termed " Justice-day " in the country, is sometimes held once a fortnight, or every month, as the case may be ; those who could not wait so long, sometimes went over to the old magistrate's house ; or if they chanced to meet him on horseback, or surveying his fields, matters were entered upon at once.

It was nothing unusual to see half a dozen lounging fellows following the old Justice up the village street, accompanied by the big constable, and every now and then they were compelled to halt to separate their dogs, for some new sally was made at almost every farm-yard gate. There were generally a good number of warrants issued out before Justice-day, among one or other of our neighbours in the hamlet, and the small adjoining market town, where they assembled to decide all business ; for no sooner did the magistrate

appear on horseback at the town-end, than the lazy shoemaker threw down his last, the drunken tailor his sleeve-board, until tag-rag and bob-tail rushed from every little alley, and by such time as they reached the Town-hall, all the old faces were crammed together, to look on and listen to the causes, many of which were old standards, and never failed to come on every time the Justice made his appearance. We had but one constable, and he had grown fat in office; nor was his temper of the mildest,—and rare fun was it to see him brandish his staff, and hear him call silence, then collaring a couple of laughter-loving vagabonds, call for assistance in the "King's name," while not a hand or foot moved to his help; and perhaps the town-clerk was busied in the mean time kicking some yelping cur out of court, or the magistrate himself looking out of the window at some fight in the street, and calling out, "Well done, Dick!" or "Bob," whichever urchin might chance to fight best; for he knew the name of almost every rapscallion in the place. On a hot day it was wonderful how soon he would hurry through a host of business, bidding one party to get out of the court and make up matters over a pot of ale; and telling another that if they pestered him any longer he would commit them for a month. Some he would advise to fight it out, then come to him again, if they could settle it no other way; and others he would take with him to the Bull's Head parlour, and there, over his glass of brandy and pipe, contrive to arrange their affairs amicably. The constable was a regular ferret in hunting up poachers, unlicensed hawkers, and vagrants; and being a Whig, the old Justice generally opposed all he said; and as fast as the one collected them together, the other discharged them, venting all his anger upon poor Dogberry, who never failed to growl in his throat, and vent his spleen upon their "looped and windowed raggednesses," whenever he could pick them up

after, and lock them up for a night in the "Kit-court," for such was the name of the cell where offenders were lodged.

But never was magistrate pestered with such a race of oddities as peopled our village; they could as soon live without food as quarrelling; nay, I have often thought that they disagreed merely for an excuse to empty sundry cups of ale over the pleasure of making matters up again, as some couples are said to quarrel in wedlock just by the way of a change, for as they were wont to say, "it was so handy to step over to Justice B——, and have a little law."

Amongst the inhabitants of the village, who were seldom free from either warrant or war, was John Stretton, the worm-doctor and elixir-vender; two medicines which he alike prescribed to man and horse. "No cure no pay," was John's motto; but as he seldom performed a cure, he contrived to get paid as well as he could, and rarely a justice-day came, but he had either issued, or had to appear against, some summons. He was always on the look-out for accidents at the cross roads which branched off in the form of a triangle in the centre of the hamlet. There might he be seen, with a large parcel of worm-cakes in one of his unfathomable coat-pockets, and a bottle of the infallible elixir in the other. If he met a victim grinning with the tooth-ache, out came the big bottle, with a thousand persuasions, and as many proofs, if words were to be believed. If a horseman passed by whose nag was broken-kneed, or had the spasms or bots, or was even short-winded, the same medicine was supplied; and although actually forced upon the poor wayfarers, with the old motto of "no cure no pay," yet woe betide him if he had not cashed up before justice-day, for John was sure to be there with his summons. He was wont to assert that his medicine was the finest thing under the face of heaven, and would cure every disorder, if they would but take enough of it. Broken legs, club-feet, blindness, deafness, dumbness,

even madness and ague-fits, were all alike to John. No patient went away uncured without being assured, that if he had but patience to wait a little longer, a few cakes and a few bottles of elixir would eventually recover him. A dear boy was old John for law.

Two other of our resident villagers were constant customers for justice; scarce a meeting transpired without Matthew Hardcastle and old John Freeman having the same cause for trial.

Meet when or where they might, neither of them would resign the wall or paling by which they were walking, but by main force. They have been known to stand arguing the matter with each other for full three hours, and then terminated it as usual by having recourse to their sticks. Let them but be passing down the street of our village, and get a sight of each other, and they began to growl like two dogs. Nay, they would sometimes turn their backs against the wall, and so move on until they met, neither leaving the other the chance to say that he had a claim to the right hand; this being the decision of our worthy magistrate, that whichever had the right hand of the wall was considered to have a just claim to it. They chanced one day to meet before the door of our old shoemaker; and he, not having the greatest share of patience in the world, began to make a clear road by using his broom-stick, cursing them in good round terms for blocking out his customers. But this he found no easy matter, for, however much they might be at variance with each other, they had no relish for the interference of a third party, but both uplifted their sticks by mutual consent to repel the attacks of their common enemy, and poor Trown became the sufferer.

The next regular claimant for justice was old Farmer Laughton, who possessed two rows of tumble-down tenements in our hamlet, which were very appropriately term-

ed "Scolding-yard." And seldom a week passed but he was turning out some refractory tenant, or taking out their windows, nailing up their doors, or walking home with the handle of the pump upon his shoulder. He never appeared happy but when engaged in some row or other with his tenants, or concocting some measure for their annoyance. True, he but rarely got any rents, for no one would take his houses who could afford to pay for a residence; so that, when rent-day came, it seemed a standing rule that they should fight it out, and it was no unusual sight to see the landlord at war with his tenants, armed with mop and broom, or sometimes emptying pails of water on each other. There were, however, a few old standards whom he dared not to attack, one having poured a kettle of boiling water upon him while he was nailing up her door, and another having emptied a vessel on his head which rather astonished him.

In the small market town was a dealer in second-hand clothes, who had generally some cause or other to answer to. Many a warrant had sprung up through a large quantity of soldiers' jackets which he had purchased, and having dyed them himself, he had made them up into new coats and trousers, which of course he was enabled to sell cheap. Strange, however, after a few days' wearing his black coats gradually assumed a dingy red again, especially in those places where they chanced to have been chafed. Some one would come and make complaint, who had been carrying a load on his back, that while the skirts of his coat retained their false colour, the back had assumed the hue of the fox; then a joiner, who had rubbed his *new* trousers against the bench while planing, looked as if he had been marked with red ochre, while boys who knelt down to play at marbles were marked like sheep. Nor was the old clothes-seller himself without his warrants, for he boasted of having garments to fit everybody; and if they chanced to be a trifle

too small, while he was persuading his customer they were the "most beautiful fit," or if, while helping him on with them, they chanced to rend, and the intended purchaser refused to pay the damage, then was there a case for the magistrate, and on justice-day the tattered garbs were sure to appear; and rare amusement did such trials furnish for the people assembled.

A great dislike had the worthy Justice of matters being carried to the sessions or the assizes, and it was truly wonderful to see the tact that he displayed in reconciling parties, who had set out with a determination of carrying matters to the very extremity of the law. Nor had they ever cause to grumble if the affair was left to his own arbitration, for where he had doubts he would generally consult some able and experienced neighbour, and unless the case was one of uncommon difficulty, generally succeed in the end in satisfying both parties.

Often might he be seen in the mornings of spring and summer stripped in his shirt sleeves and busied in his garden, raking, hoeing, or attending to his choicest flower-beds, accompanied by some party who had "come over to arrange matters," or perhaps some cause that had been put off on the preceding day at the hall. Then would the honest magistrate pause every now and then, and leaning on the handle of his rake, listen or reply to their arguments; and if he could not succeed in bringing them to his own views, he would commence raking, or working at a most furious rate, and tearing up both weeds and flowers together. If, on the contrary, they followed his advice, and showed a disposition to come to reasonable terms, then down went his garden-tools, and a right welcome was given them to partake of the best his house afforded—rich or poor, it made but little difference, so long as they bore an honest name.

His lovely daughter too, to use the country phrase, "was

worth her weight in gold," and many a time had her sweet and lady-like manners succeeded in repairing the breaches which her father's irritability sometimes made. Then she could plead so eloquently for any poor culprit who was about to be committed; her sweet imploring eyes, too, outdid all language, and if her plea was seconded by the vagabond's wife standing weeping beside her husband, why, twenty to one, he was released on his own bond; and perhaps a few nights after might be found stifling pheasants with brimstone on their roosts in the woods, or again planting his snares in the magistrate's park.

Many said, "He was too easy by half;" they told the truth, but then it was not in his nature to deal harshly with any one, no, not if even they had injured him. But, oh! it was something to be loved like the old Justice—to have almost everybody's good word—to be greeted with smiles wherever he went—to find every ragged urchin ready to run the shoes off his feet to open the gates for him, and to see all the grey-headed old men salute him with a reverential bow, and bless him in their hearts as he passed on. Plundered and imposed upon he was almost every day of his life; he seemed to find a pleasure in forgiving the offenders; it was a kind of a race between himself and them, as if to see which should first become weary, the offender or the forgiver. Dear old man: he has thrown a penny for the apple which he accepted, and which but an hour before the urchin had plundered from his own orchard.

We will suppose ourselves in the Town-hall, as we have often been during trial, whilst all assembled have a word or two to drop in just as it suits their fancy.

"What charge now?" said the Justice, looking at the clock, and thinking of his dinner.

"Stevenson, who keeps the chandler's shop, against Freeman and Hardcastle," said the constable.

" State it quick," continued the magistrate.

" Your worship will please to remember, that these two crusty old fellows had a regular four hours' dispute under my window, until I began to think that they never, never intended to separate; so I went up stairs and emptied a pail of clean water upon their heads. Well, your worship, instead of laying on each other with their sticks, as they mostly do, they both set on and broke my window."

" False evidence, your worship!" exclaimed old Freeman; " the water was dirty, and smelled as if he 'd been swilling his filthy shop floor in it, — it stank as bad as his shop."

" My shop 's sweet, you calumniating old villain," replied the chandler, shaking his fist in the other's face.

" Well, well, don't fight here," said the magistrate; " if you want to fight, get out—there 's more room outside—and settle your dispute amongst yourselves. What damage have they done ?" continued the Justice.

" Broken twelve panes of glass," replied the chandler, " at three shillings a pane,—thirty-six shillings, your worship."

" It 's false," shouted old Hardcastle, stamping his stick on the floor; " five of them were cracked, and one was stuffed full of old rags, and another had a piece of bacon reared against it, as dry and hard as a board, to keep the wind out."

" Quite time they were replaced with new ones then," continued the magistrate. " But what have you two quarrelsome old fellows to say for yourselves ? Did I not last time decide that he who had the right hand of the wall should not give it up ?"

" But your worship must decide which is to have the wall," said Stevenson, " when both their backs are against it."

"Humph, — hey? Is there any case to decide by in Blackstone?" inquired the magistrate of the clerk.

"None, your worship," was the reply.

"Then you must pay the damages," said the Justice; "and for the other matter, fight it out as usual."

"But our clothes, your worship," growled the aggressors, both together; "wet through," continued one; "dreadful rheumatism," added the other,—"severe cold."

"Get into another room," continued the Justice; "and if you can't decide it any other way, fight the cold out of your bones. Thunder and patience! if you come before me again on this matter, I'll commit you all for a month to the House of Correction."

"My windows!" exclaimed the chandler.

But the magistrate immediately took up a volume of Burns' Justice, and would have given him the law in a lump, had he not put his best leg foremost.

"What case next? — quick! — quick!" proceeded the Justice; "ordered my dinner at three, — can't be detained much longer to hear your nonsense."

"Sally Penny against her husband, for giving her a black eye," vociferated the constable.

"Can't be hindered with that woman's chat,—she would tell a tale as long as to-day and to-morrow," proceeded the old magistrate, growing more crusty as the hour for dinner drew near,—"I dare say she deserved it. What have you got to say, John Penny? I suppose you were both drunk, as usual?"

"The truth is, your worship," said John, "she's never satisfied; she was drunk last night, and very drunk indeed the night before; she was the same this morning,—and she's drunk now. She wants to be an angel, and I can't afford it. I'm willing for her to be drunk once a day, your

worship, and that 's as much as I can do ;—as for her black eye, she tumbled down and trod on it—that 's all."

" Break both their necks down stairs, constable ; — or here, give them this shilling — they mean to kill themselves with drinking, and the sooner it 's done the better. What case next ?"

" Armstrong and Kirk against Martin, the second-hand clothes-seller," shouted Tipstaff, " and Martin against Armstrong."

" Quick,—state case,—be brief!" said the Justice, looking again at the clock ; then muttering to himself, " Armstrong against Martin, and Martin against Armstrong.— What the devil now ?"

" Please your worship——" said Kirk.

" But it doth not please me !" exclaimed the old Justice ; " quick, sirrah ! state your case, — we 'll save the ' pleases' and ' worships' for after-dinner compliments."

" Then, your worship, I bought a second-hand black coat of Abraham Martin a fortnight ago, which he said was as good as new, — and it did look as black and bright as you would wish to see a coat. Well, your worship, I put on my clean white trousers, and went out, Sunday before last——"

" The old tale,—" said the Justice, interrupting him. " Martin, you 're a long while selling off those soldiers' old jackets :— did I not tell you to ticket them, so that your customers might know what they were buying ?"

" I did," replied Martin ; " but your worship sees, when they get mixed among the other goods, it 's difficult to tell them again, without a good deal of rubbing."

So would matters go on ; and every one who had won a cause, when they got outside gave the signal to the boys, who huzzaed and threw up their crownless hats, and made

the little market-place to ring again. Nor would they disperse until they had watched the old magistrate out of the Bull's Head Inn, where he mostly dined ; and often, when he had taken an extra glass, he would throw a few halfpence amongst them, and leave them fighting and scrambling with each other, while he rode off like a good old-fashioned Justice of the Peace.

RURAL POETRY.

BROWN'S "BRITANNIA'S PASTORALS," AND "SHEPHERD'S PIPE."

To my truly beloved Friend, Mr. Brown, on his Pastorals.

But I have seen thy work, and I know thee:
And, if thou list thyself, what thou canst be,
For though but early in these paths thou tread,
I find thee write most worthy to be read.

BEN JONSON.

OUR object in the present chapter is to bring before our readers a few beautiful passages from the works of a sterling old English poet, whose writings are too little known; one who, in his day, was a favourite of Rare Ben Jonson, and had complimentary poems addressed to him by Michael Drayton, Selden, Brooke, Herbert, Withers, and many other celebrated writers of that period. Beautiful, however, as his poems are, and excelling, in our humble opinion, nearly all that come under the denomination of Pastoral Poetry in the English language, you look in vain for his name in the Essays of Pope, Warton, and Johnson, in which they profess to treat upon this subject. They make no mention of either William Browne or his "Britannia's Pastorals;" and sorry are we to add, that among all the Miscellaneous Collections of Poetry, but few extracts (and those of an inferior description) from his works are to be found. Many of the compilers of English

poetry have never once alluded to him, and those who have, almost lead us to conclude that they never read a tithe of his works.

Bold as the assertion may appear, we will undertake, in this article, to produce some of the most delightful passages of rural poetry which have ever been written, scarcely excepting the mighty compositions of Milton. It is a duty we owe to the dead to do justice to their memories, and we doubt not but that many of the extracts which we shall here bring forth, will cause the works of the author to be inquired after, and not a few of the quotations which we make, to be selected and stored up among the many other gems which this immortal island abounds in. We understand no other language but that of our mother-tongue,—and that, we fear, indifferently,—therefore are unable either to read Theocritus or Virgil, saving by translations; and if by this method the ideas of the authors can be faithfully given (for we care not for words alone), William Browne is as great a pastoral poet as either of the above-named authors. His mind is thoroughly English,—he drank deeply from that well whence Chaucer and Spenser drew their inspiration — the ever-flowing fountain of Nature. Nor need a stronger proof be brought of his good taste than that intense admiration which he had for the writings of Spenser, —a poet whose works are the very touchstone of taste, and which none but a true lover of poetry can ever thoroughly relish.

Poetry ought to be judged by the emotions it awakens more than the mere sounding of words, and the artificial turning of its sentences; for, after all, it consists in the thought, and not the expression; you cannot feel the words: the image it calls up and the feeling it stirs belong to a higher power than mere language. Instance the thousands of lines which are published and read every year,

and contain not an atom of true poetry. The same power is to be found in descriptive or rural poetry; for although in this case the passions are but seldom appealed to, yet must the author produce a series of pictures, or so shape his thought, that it shall call up some object which has before been seen, and bring it as forcibly to the mind of the reader as if it stood before him. This power, as we will prove, our author possesses to an extent which has rarely been excelled.

There is a green look about his pages, he carries with him the true aroma of old forests, his lines are mottled with rich mosses, and there is a gnarled ruggedness upon the stems of his trees. His waters have a wet look and a plashing sound about them, and you feel the fresh air play around you while you read. His birds are the free denizens of the fields, and they send their songs so life-like through the covert, that their music rings upon the ear, and you are carried away with his "sweet pipings." He heard the skylark sing in the blue dome of heaven, before he transferred its warblings to his pages, and inhaled the perfume of the flowers he described; the roaring of the trees was to him an old familiar sound; his soul was a rich store-house for all that is beautiful in Nature. But he is dead, and needs not our praise! he has erected for himself a monument which will stand securely when we are forgotten; nearly two centuries have already swept over his grave, and (so far as our limited research has been carried) no one has arisen to do his memory that justice which it deserves.

It is not our intention to test his merits by that foot and yard measurement which some have erected as the standard of criticism: we understand it not, but must trust to that little innate perception which God has given us to work out our task. Our uncultivated taste would

lead us to give a wider range to pastoral poetry than that to which Dr. Johnson circumscribed it, wherein he says it is "A poem in which any action or passion is represented by its effects upon a country life." To our ears there is something too much of a dramatic sound in this definition; the tranquillity which we look for in rural life has in general but little of "action and passion," especially in that called pastoral, where we only expect to find shepherds tending their flocks; sitting idly upon the brow of some hill, or under the shade of a tree, and either singing to each other for some rustic prize, or describing the beauty of a shepherdess. Why should Theocritus or Virgil be looked up to alone, and so closely followed? are we not as free to strike out a plan of our own as the old dramatists were to reject the choruses from their works, instead of adhering rigidly to the system of Eschylus and others? Why should Aristotle (who has been the cause of more volumes of dead, dry, uninteresting matter being written than any other author,) be brought forth to sit in judgment over the epic and the drama, or the fetters which he has forged be still worn? To us who know nothing of the dead languages, and have still as great a love for Shakspeare and Milton as those who do, these are matters of mystery. The study of time, and place, and union, which we have heard are the great stumbling blocks of this formidable old Critic, have in our opinion, robbed many bright minds of that freshness which they would otherwise have thrown into their pages. We have heard great and learned men talk over this subject, and when we have reached home have blessed God that we never understood Aristotle. The man who ventures abroad in the sunshine with his mouth tied up for fear of taking cold, will inhale but little of the pure air of heaven; and amid a number of rules, which really do no good, many

are afraid to stir lest they should stumble upon something wrong.

"The Cotter's Saturday Night," "The Deserted Village," "The Farmer's Boy," "The Gentle Shepherd," and many other delightful poems which we could name, ought to be classed as British pastorals of the highest order. What have we to do with Arcadia? — why should the land that gave birth to Chaucer, Shakspeare, and Milton, stoop to take laws from any crabbed old Greek? Take your fashions from France if you will, but leave us a literature which we can call our own. Our colleges are choked to death by foreign literature; our great schools imbibe anything but a pure English taste; Terence and Horace, Virgil and others, are pealed into their ears like the monotonous tones of a bell, until they are half stupified: they know more about the laws of the Romans than those made by Alfred. Talk to them about the poetry of Gower, Chaucer, Lydgate, Occleve, and others of our own ancient writers, and not one in a hundred has read their works.

We have no English school of poetry. Oh! that we had the power either to abuse or shame those who are professors of it into a love for our old literature, then might we hope to see the people of England English people; and in place of those quotations which are so often made in Parliament from the Greek or Latin authors, and which such poor wretches as ourselves can never understand, we should have a few old British steel-pointed arrows shot across the house such as no foreign armour could resist—cross-bolts and mangonels that would strike a traitor or a renegade dead.

We do not object to the ancient Greek and Roman poets being read, or the language in which they are written taught in our schools; all we complain of is, that our valuable old English literature is too much neglected. Those who say that the works of our old authors are dry and uninteresting,

know nothing about them. We could point out such passages in their writings as would stand comparison with the best portion of the ancients. Plain-spoken they are occasionally; but where is there a true Englishman that is not? Horace and Ovid, from what little we know of them through translations, are never over particular.

England is richer in pastoral poetry than any other country in the world; it is less disfigured with gods and goddesses, who are perched upon the mountains, and on the clouds among the ancient Greeks, and leave upon the mind the same effect as the scenery of a theatre, rather than that rough, natural, and simple impression which our own rural poetry produces. True, our literature is not entirely free from these marble monsters, but with us it is rather an affectation than otherwise, and perhaps, after all, may be thrown in the teeth of our false system of education.

Look at our old ballads and poems, our ancient dramas, our histories, the writings of our oldest divines. What description do you there find! what an appreciation of the beauties of nature! what thoughts and images are there crowded together! what stinging satire and true reasoning! all bold, manly, and English. Their arguments were like their blows; they were decisive, and at once struck home; there was no withstanding them; they wielded their pens as they did their swords, and hacked away at the hardest mail: every stroke either stunned, or struck through; witness Chaucer's prose, Wickliffe's Sermons, and Hall's Satires, and a host of other writings. It is a marvel that some of our periodical writers do not march deeper into the land; there are hundreds of good works that only require to be a little better known in order to become popular, and instil a right feeling into this willing age. But we are wandering far from our original purpose, which was to point out the beauties of William Browne, a poet who lived in the golden

age of Queen Elizabeth. And without further comment we shall quote one of his beautiful descriptions of

EARLY MORNING.

" —— 'Tis not too late,
For the turtle and her mate
Are sitting yet in rest ;
And the throstle hath not been
Gathering worms yet on the green,
But attends her nest.
Not a bird hath taught her young,
Nor her morning's lesson sung
In the shady grove ;
But the nightingale i' th' dark
Singing, woke the mounting lark ;
She records her love.
The sun hath not with his beams
Gilded yet our crystal streams,
Rising from the sea ;
Mists do crown the mountain tops,
And each pretty myrtle drops ;
'Tis but newly day."

Any one who has been a close observer of nature must be struck by the simple fidelity of this picture ; there is no sacrifice of sense made here for effect ; all is in true keeping. It was so early that the throstle had not yet left her nest to gather worms on the green, a bird that goes abroad ere it is well light ; the nightingale had but just finished her song and awoke the lark ; all the other songsters were silent : the flowers were drooping, for the sun had not yet appeared, and in the next line we read that—

" Some man cometh in the mist."

All was grey, cold, and silent — no sound heard but the song of the lark, and she sung high among the cold-looking

clouds, for not a sunbeam as yet gilds them, nor has a ray flashed upon the chilly streams. But while we have been delaying the reader with our remarks the picture has changed to a clear

SPRING MORNING.

" ——— See the Spring
Is the earth enamelling,
And the birds on every tree
Greet the morn with melody.
Hark! how yonder throstle chants it,
And her mate as proudly vaunts it:
See how every stream is drest
By her margin with the best
Of Flora's gifts; she seems glad
For such brooks such flowers she had;
And the trees are quaintly tired
With green buds, of all desired;
And the hawthorn every day
Spreads some little show of May:
See the primrose sweetly set
By the much-loved violet,
Which the banks do sweetly cover,
As they would invite a lover
With his lass to see their dressing,
And to grace them by their pressing."

Here is poetry! the two lines in italics are worth the whole price of this volume. Who after this will say that Milton's L'Allegro is the store-house for all rural images, when these lines were written before Milton was born? But it is a folly to quarrel with the criticisms of the dead, or we could say something on this matter; ay! and prove what we asserted. But we have not yet done: here is another gem.

MORNING.

" ——— Grey-eyed Aurora yet
Held all the meadows in a cooling sweat ;
The milk-white gossamers not upward snow'd,
Nor was the sharp and useful steering goad
Laid on the strong-neck'd ox : no gentle bud
The sun had dried ; the cattle chewed the cud,
Low levelled on the grass : no flies' fierce sting
Enforced the horse into a furious ring
To tear the passive earth, nor lash his tail
About his buttocks broad.

* * . * * *

——— It was so early time
The careful smith had in his sooty forge
Kindled no coal : nor did his hammers urge
His neighbour's patience : owls abroad did fly,
And day as then might plead his infancy.

* * * * *

By this had chanticleer, the village-clock,
Bidden the good-wife for her maids to knock ;
And the swart ploughman for his breakfast stayed,
That he might till those lands were fallows laid
The hills and valleys here and there resound
With the re-echoes of the deep-mouth'd hound.
Each shepherd's daughter with her cleanly pail,
Was come a-field to milk the morning meal.
And ere the sun had climbed the eastern hills
To gild the murmuring burns and pretty rills,
Before the labouring bee had left his hive,
And nimble fishes, which in rivers dive,
Began to leap and catch the drowned fly,
I rose from rest ——— "

Remember that this was written before the author was twenty years of age, and when Shakspeare's writings were but little known ; yet here we have the epithets of " grey-eyed " morning, the " strong neck'd ox," the " sooty-forge " of the smith, the " deep-mouthed hound," the " swart plough-

man," and many others, such as the greatest poets have not disdained to use, well knowing that they could never excel them.

Here is another lovely morsel.

A CONCERT OF BIRDS.

" As wooed by May's delights, I have been borne
To take the kind air of a wistful morn
Near Tavy's voiceful stream, (to whom I owe
More strains than from my pipe can ever flow),
Here have I heard a sweet bird never *lin* [cease]
To chide the river for his clamourous din ;
There seemed another in his song to tell,
That what the fair stream said he likēd well ;
And going further heard another too
All varying still in what the others do ;
A little thence, a fourth with little pain
Conned all their lessons, and then sung again ;
So numberless the songsters are that sing
In the sweet groves of the too careless spring,
That I no sooner could the hearing lose
Of one of them, but straight another rose,
And perching deftly on a quaking spray
Nigh tired herself, to make her hearer stay."

Is not this a sweet display of fancy ? a description such as only a true poet could give ? Who beside would think of making a bird chide the murmuring of a stream—or another singing and telling how well it liked the sound ? A sterling old poet was William Browne, and so will our readers confess before we have done with him. Here is another specimen —

EMPLOYMENT OF SHEPHERDS.

" Some from the company removed are
To meditate the songs they meant to play,
Or make a new round for next holiday ;

Some tales of love their love-sick fellows told ;
Others were seeking stakes to pitch the fold.
This all alone was mending of his pipe ;
That, for his lass, sought fruits most sweet and ripe.
Here, from the rest, a lonely shepherd's boy
Sits piping on a hill, as if his joy
Would still endure, or else that age's past
Should never make him think what he had lost.
Yonder a shepherdess knits by the springs,
Her hands still keeping time to what she sings.
By some sweet river sits a musing lad,
That mourns the loss of what he sometimes had,—
His love by death bereft :—when fast by him
An aged swain takes place, as near the brim
Of his grave as of the river ; showing how
That as those floods, which pass along right now,
Are followed still by others from their spring,
And in the sea have all their burying.

* * * * * *

Thus sat the old man counselling the young ;
While underneath a tree which overhung
The silver stream (as some delight it took
To trim its thick boughs in the crystal brook)
Were set a jocund crew of youthful swains
Wooing their sweetings with delicious strains."

We will under take to commit to memory the worst poem which has been published within the last year, if any sensitive stickler for the ancients can produce a more beautiful passage on a similar subject translated into English. What can be finer than the old man, who is as near his grave as he is to the river-brim, sitting down to console the youth, and telling him that happiness like the stream "has its burying." — But we here give the old man's words, which we omitted, to preserve the connecting pictures.

" Right so our times are known, our ages found ;
Nothing is permanent within this round :
One age is now ; another that succeeds,
Extirping all things which the former breeds ;

Another follows that, doth new times raise,
New years, new months, new weeks, new hours, new days;
Mankind thus goes like rivers to the spring,
And in the earth have all their burying."

But what need have we to point out the beautiful groupings of the picture? a blind man could see them. He could fancy the little knot congregated on the sunny slope conning over their songs for the next holiday; or hear the shepherdess singing beside the spring whilst she was knitting, the stream itself coming in with its rippling chorus, as it stepped in music over the pebbles, and

"Her hands still keeping time to what she sang."

The low laughter of the young couple hidden in the underwood seeking ripe fruits; the lips of the shepherdess sweeter than the kernels of the clustering filberts. The boy sitting on the hill, and filling the valley with sweet sounds, peradventure piping to the fair rustic who sat knitting at the hill foot, beside the stream. But we are "gilding refined gold!" we can feel the beauty of the picture, and leave others to contemplate it, as it stands, while we proceed with our extracts.

SHEPHERDESS BATHING.

"——— As a herdess in a summer's day,
Heat with the glorious sun's all-searching ray,
In the calm evening, leaving her fair flock,
Betakes herself unto a foam-girt rock,
Where sitting to undo her buskins white
And wash her neat legs,—as her use each night,—
The enamoured flood, before she can unlace them,
Rolls up his waves as hastening to embrace them.
And though to help them some small gale do blow,
And one of twenty can but reach her so;
Yet will a many little surges be
Flashing upon the rock full busily,
And do the best they can to kiss her feet;
But that their power and will, not equal meet:"

OLD ENGLISH GARDEN.

" —— Here the curious cutting of a hedge,
There, by a pond the trimming of the sedge ;
Here the fine setting of well-shading trees,
The walks there mounting up by small degrees,
The gravel and the green so equal lie,
They, with the rest, draw on your lingering eye :
Here the sweet smells that do perfume the air,
Arising from the infinite repair
Of odoriferous buds, and herbs of price,
As if it were another paradise,
So please the smelling sense, that you are fain
Where last you walked to turn and walk again.
There the small birds with their harmonious notes
Sing to a spring that smileth as it floats ;
For in its face a many dimples show,
And often skips as it did dancing go ;
Here further down an over-arched alley,
That from a hill goes winding in a valley,
You spy at end thereof a standing lake,
Where some ingenious artist strives to make
The water (brought in turning pipes of lead
Through brids of earth most lively fashioned),
To counterfeit and mock the Sylvans all
In singing well their own set madrigal.
This with no small delight retains your ear,
And makes you think none blest, but who live here.
Then in another place the fruits that be
In gallant clusters decking each good tree,
Invite your hand to crop them from the stem,
And liking one, taste every sort of them ;
Then to the arbours walk, then to the bowers,
Thence to the walks again, and to the flowers ;
Then to the birds, and to the clear spring thence,
Now pleasing one, and then another sense :
Here one walks oft, and yet anew begin'th,
As if it were some hidden labyrinth :
So loth to part, and so content to stay,
That when the gard'ner knocks for you t' away

It grieves you so leave the pleasures in it,
You almost wish, that you had never seen it."

Is he not a fine old fellow? how we wish to be with him in that old-fashioned garden with its circumspect hedges, its "well-shading trees," and dimpled springs,

"That often skips, as it did dancing go:"

And those "birds of earth" singing their "own set madrigal;" some tune perhaps composed by Bird himself, for he was a celebrated musician in Elizabeth's day, and might lend the "ingenious artist" his assistance. Then the gardener knocks when you are to go away—bells were not so much in fashion in those days. So in Suckling, when the wedding dinner was ready, he says,—

"Just in the nick the cook knocked thrice,
And all the waiters in a trice
His summons did obey."

Our next extract shall be a description of

NIGHT.

"Now great Hyperion left his golden throne,
That on the dancing waves in glory shone;
For whose declining on the western shore
The oriental hills black mantles wore,
And thence apace the gentle Twilight fled,
That had from hideous caverns usherēd
All-drowsy Night; who in a car of jet
By steeds of iron-gray is drawn through the sky:
The helps of Darkness waited orderly.
The pitchy curtains fell 'twixt earth and heaven,
And as Night's chariot through the air was driven,
Clamour grew dumb, unheard was shepherd's song,
And Silence girt the woods; *no warbling tongue*
Talked to the echo; satyrs broke their dance,
And all the upper world lay in a trance.

Only the curled streams soft chidings kept;
And little gales, that from the green leaf swept
Dry Summer's dust, in fearful whisperings stirr'd,
As loath to waken any singing bird."

Find us, in the whole range of poetry, a more beautiful description of Night than the above. It will lose nothing when read beside that splendid burst of Milton's, beginning with "Next come still evening on," etc. Here we have the eastern hills mourning for the departure of the Sun, and Twilight ushering in all-drowsy Night—then flying back, as she lets fall her pitchy curtain, and her awful chariot gliding along, drawn by her grim and iron-gray steeds: "Clamour grows dumb;" a silence falls upon the woods; even Echo sleeps. On earth also, all is still: read the last eight lines again and again, until the repose that hangs around them sink into the heart, and you never can forget them: — They are such sounds as seem to make the air more silent; motions in which there is a tranquil rest just keeping the stillness awake. But we must hasten on without pausing to mar his beauties with our remark.

RIVERS.

"And every river, with unusual pride,
And dimpled cheek, *rolls sleeping* to the tide."

A NYMPH.

"A hunting nymph, awakened with his moan,—
That in a bower near-hand lay all alone,
Twining her small arms round her slender waist,
That by no others used to be embraced,—
Got up."

A CALM.

"As still as midnight were the sullen waves,
And Neptune's ever-shaking, silvery breast,
As smooth as when the halcyon builds her nest,

None other wrinkles on his face were seen,
Than on the fertile mead or sportive green
Where never plough-share ript.—
The whistling reeds upon the water's side
Shot up their sharp heads in a stately pride,
And not a binding osier bowed his head,
But on his root him bravely carried;
No dandling leaf played with the subtil air,
So smooth the sea was—and the sky so fair."

NYMPH AND PEARLS.

"This said, she wept, low-leaning on her hand,
Her briny tears down-raining on the sand;
Which seen by those who sport it in the seas
On dolphins' backs—the fair Nereides—
They came on shore, and slily as they fell,
Conveyed each tear into an oyster-shell,
Turning those liquid drops to orient pearl."

MUSIC ON THE THAMES.

"As I have seen when on the breast of Thames,
A heavenly bevy of sweet English dames,
In some calm evening of delightful May,
With music give a farewell to the Day;
Or as they would, with an admired tone,
Greet Night's ascension to her ebon throne,
Rapt with their melody, a thousand more
Run to be wafted from the bounding shore."

OLD TREE.

"——— Its aged root, thick lined with moss,
Seemed as a shelter it had lending been
Against cold winter's storms and wreakful teen: [sorrow]
Or clad the stem in summer with that hue
His withered branches not a long time knew,
For in his hollow trunk and withered grain,
The cuckoo now had many a winter lain,
And thriving ants there laid their eggs in store;
The dormouse slept there, and a many more."

THE HAWTHORN.

"Amongst the many buds proclaiming May,
Decking the fields in holiday array,
Striving which shall surpass in bravery,
Mark the fair blooming of the hawthorn tree:
Who, finely clothēd in a robe of white,
Feeds full the wanton eye with May's delight,
Yet for the bravery that she is in,
Doth neither handle card, nor wheel to spin,
Nor changeth robes but twice—is never seen
In other colours than in white or green."

Here is a string of old English pearls, put together at random, just as we would pull up a handful of wild-flowers in some sweet meadow! Look at that river rolling sleepily along, — how like the motion of calm water, gliding slumberously until it is awakened by the tide. Then the nymph sleeping alone! and, twining her own small arms round her slender waist, dancing laughingly along,—perhaps with her white hands clasped behind her, her head half-averted, and her ringlets streaming out like a —— No, we can find no comparison.

Then, again, look at the calm,—"still as midnight,"—not a breath of wind blows even the reeds, that are agitated if a bird but flies over them,

"Shoot up their sharp heads"

erect;—the osiers too, limber things which we have bent into a thousand shapes, carry their heads bravely and straight up from the "stock," out of which, perhaps, scores spring; and if only one is set in motion, all the rest are astir. But it was so still, that

"No dandling leaf played with the air;"

it would not even ruffle the down upon the bosom of a dove,

" And where the dead leaf fell there it would rest."

Look at the melody of those lines on the Thames, how smoothly they flow along,

" Like some calm evening of delightful May"

ushered in by the song of the nightingale, which we can listen to, and watch star after star break forth at the same time, while a thousand little echoes

" Run to be wafted from the bounding shore."

If thou art a dear lover of poetry, reader, thou wilt pardon a thousand faults in this volume, for the sake of the snatches of " sweet verse" which we have brought before thee. But our path is still onward, for we have many a fair flower yet to cull ;—and here are a few more of them, fresh and beautiful, as if they had but just sprung from the bosom of May, in place of having stood nearly two centuries and a half.

FLOWERS.

" The daisy, scattered on each mead and down,
A golden tuft within a silver crown—
Fair fall that dainty flower ! and may there be
No shepherd graced that doth not honour thee !
The primrose, when with six leaves got in grace,
Maids as a true love in their bosoms place ;
The spotless lily, by whose pure leaves be
Noted the chaste thoughts of virginity ;
Carnations sweet, with colour like the fire ;
The fit resemblance of inflamed desire ;
The harebell, for her stainless azured hue,
Claims to be worn of none but those are true ;
The rose, like ready youth, in beauty stands,
And would be cropt by none but fairest hands ;

The yellow king-cups, Flora them assigned
To be the badges of a jealous mind ;
The orange-tawny marigold, the night
Hides not her colour from a searching sight
The columbine, in tawny often taken,
Is then ascribed to such as are forsaken ;
Flora's choice buttons of a russet dye
Is hope even in the depth of misery."

GORGEOUS COLOURING.

" As in the rainbow's many-coloured hue
Here see we *watchet* [light grey blue] deepened with a blue,
There a dark tawny with a purple mixt,—
Yellow and flame, with streaks of green betwixt—
A crimson stream into a blushing run,
And ends still with the colour it begun ;
Drawing the deeper to a lighter stain,
Bringing the lighter to the deep again ;
With such rare art each mingleth with its fellow,
The blue with watchet, green and red with yellow :
Like to the changes which we daily see,
About the dove's neck with variety,
Where none can say, though he it strict attends,
Here one begins, and there the other ends :
So did the maidens with their various flowers
Deck up their windows, and make neat their bowers :
Using such colour as they did dispose
The ruddy peony with the lighter rose ;
The monk's-hood with the bugloss ; and entwine
The white, the blue, the flesh-like columbine ;
With pinks, sweet-Williams ;—that, far off, the eye
Could not the manner of their mixtures spy.
Then with those flowers they most of all did prize,
With all their skill, and in most curious-wise,
On tufts of herbs or rushes, would they frame
A dainty border round the shepherd's name,
Or posies make, so quaint, so apt, so rare,
As if the Muses only livēd there ;
And that the after-world should strive in vain
What they then did to counterfeit again."

Had we been rich, and lived in the days of our author, and heard him repeat those lines which we have marked in italics, for every word we would have given him a lump of gold, and for a device he should have worn a dove surrounded by a wreath of daises—

"A golden tuft within a silver crown."

We will wager our copy of Shakspeare — the greatest treasure we possess — against the worst volume of poetry, that there is not so beautiful a description of the daisy to be found in any language, in the same given number of words. But what is this even, beside the idea of bringing in the colouring of the dove's neck, after having tried to arrange the hues of the rainbow, examined every tint, and then gone over them again, to take at last the image from the neck of a dove to describe the effects of all those flowers, interwoven and crossed and softened one within the other. Oh! he is a fine fellow—a true poet! A bumper to the immortal memory of William Browne! were it Burgundy, we would drink it up, — but the volumes that lie beside us are the true Hippocrene. Thank God for good poetry, it is truly a blessing and a luxury, in all weathers! Another gem—

AN ENGLISH LANDSCAPE.

"——— A landscape that doth stand
Wrought by the pencil of some curious hand,
We may descry here meadow, there a wood;
Here standing ponds, and there a running flood;
Here on some mount a house of pleasure vanted,
Where once the warring cannon had been planted;
There on a hill a swain pipes out the day,
Out-braving all the choristers of May:
A huntsman here follows his cry of hounds,
Driving the hare along the fallow grounds,

There in another place some high-raised land,
In pride bears out her breasts unto the strand ;
Here stands a bridge, and there a conduit-head,
While round a May-pole some the measures tread ;
There boys the truant play and leave their book,
Here stands an angler with a baited hook ;
There for a stag one lurks within a bough,
Here sits a maiden milking her white cow ;
There on a goodly plain, by Time thrown down,
Lies buried in its dust some ancient town,
Which now, in-villaged, there is only seen
In its vast ruins what its state hath been."

Our next extract is a subject worthy the hand of Apelles — we scarcely remember, among the many beautiful bits which we have seen translated from the Greek, a finer and more chaste description of a

MAIDEN UNROBING.

" —— A lovely maiden, pure and chaste,
With naked ivory neck and gown unlaced,
Within her chamber, when the day is fled,
Makes poor her garments to enrich her bed ;
First, puts she off her lily silken gown,
That shrieks for sorrow as she lays it down,
And with her arms graceth a bodice fine,
Embracing her as it would ne'er untwine.
Her flaxen hair, ensnaring all beholders,
She next permits to wave about her shoulders,
And though she cast it back, the silken slips
Still forward steal, and hang upon her lips,
Whereat she, sweetly angry, with her laces
Binds up the wanton locks in curious traces,
While twirling with her joints each hair long lingers
As loath to be enchained but by her fingers."

MOTHER WAITING FOR HER BOY.

" At her door, expecting him, his mother sate,
Wondering her boy would stay from her so late ;

Framing for him unto herself excuses,
And with such thoughts gladly herself abuses,
As that her son, since day grew old and weak,
Stayed with the maids to run at barley-break ;
Or that he coursed a park with females fraught,
Who would not run except they might be caught ;
Or in the thicket laid some wily snare
To take the rabbit or the purblind hare ;
Or taught his dog to catch the climbing kid ;—
Thus shepherds do, and thus she thought he did."

How very natural is the whole of this simple description! so like a fond old mother who loves, and has spoilt, her child; "gladly abusing herself," framing a thousand fond excuses; her heart beating all the time, lest something worse than she dare to think of has happened. What a picture would it make! — the fond anxiety pervading the old woman's countenance, starting at every sound — her cottage — but we know that our readers will see and feel all that we would say, so we will again proceed with our extracts—and here are three rural gems.

SQUIRREL HUNTING.

" —— A nimble squirrel from the wood,
Ranging the hedges for his filbert food,
Sits partly on a bough his brown nuts cracking,
And from the shell the sweet white kernel taking.
When with their crooks and bags, a host of boys,
To share with him, come with so great a noise
That he is forced to leave a nut nigh broke,
And for his life leap to a neighbouring oak ;
Thence to a beech, thence to a row of ashes ;
While through the quagmires and red-water-plashes
The boys run, dabbling on through thick and thin ;
One tears his hose, the other breaks his shin ;
This, torn and tattered, hath, with much ado,
Got through the briars—and that hath lost his shoe ;

This drops his band, that headlong falls for haste ;
Another cries behind for being the last :—
With sticks and stones, and many a sounding hollow,
The little fool with no small sport they follow ;
Whilst he, from tree to tree, from spray to spray,
Gets to the wood and hides him in his *dray*" [nest].

The whole of this description is admirable — it is perfect and true to nature. Many a time have we hunted the squirrel in the woods and plantations around our native home — have torn our clothes and lost our shoes, or got entangled amongst the brambles. Now climbing a tree, to drive him from his station, and ere we got halfway up, away he would bound, at one spring, to the next. Then, what an hallooing we made when he chanced to fall to the ground, or with the speed of thought ran up the next stem ; where he would sit on some slender branch rocking himself, and looking down upon us with his little, bright dark eyes. Many a bite have we had from his small yellow teeth, ere we captured him, and made a prison-house of our hats. The perusal of this extract has seemed to take twenty years from off our shoulders,—has made us boys again,—and sent our thoughts into the merry green woods, recalling our happy and boyish days.

Our next quotation is also beautiful, and brings back another familiar scene, when with bag and crook we sallied forth a

NUTTING.

" —— As a wandering boy to gather nuts,
A hooked pole he from a hazel cuts ;
Now throws it here, then there, to take some hold,
But bootless and in vain : the rocky mold
Admits no cranny, where his hazel hook
Might promise him a step, till in a nook
Somewhat above his reach, he hath espied
A little oak, and having often tried

To catch a bough with standing on his toe,
Or leaping up, yet not prevailing so,
He rolls a stone toward the little tree,
Then, getting on it, fastens warily
His pole into a bough, and at his drawing
The early rising crow with clamourous cawing,
Leaving the green bough flies about the rock,
Whilst twenty-twenty couples to him flock.
And now within his reach the thin leaves wave ;
With one hand only then he holds his stave,
And with the other grasping first the leaves,
A pretty bough he in his hand receives ;
Then to his girdle making fast the hook,
His other hand another bough hath took :
His first a third, and that, another gives
To bring him to the place ———— "

We regret that he has not brought as noisy a group into his nutting scene, as he has done in the former extract ; for excellent as it is, we like the description of squirrel hunting much better; there is more life about it: however, this scene was too rural to be omitted. Now for a specimen of an

ANGLER.

" Now as an Angler melancholy standing
Upon a green bank, yielding room for landing,
A wriggling yellow worm thrust on his hook,
Now in the midst he throws, then in a nook ;
Here pulls his line, there throws it in again,
Mending his hook and bait, but all in vain :
Long doth he stand viewing the curled stream ;
At last a hungry pike, or well-grown bream,
Snatch at the worm, and hasten fast away ;
He knowing it a fish of stubborn sway,
Pulls up his rod, but soft ; as having skill
Wherewith the hook fast holds the fish's gill.—
Then all the line he freely yieldeth him,
Whilst furiously all up and down doth swim

The ensnared fish; here on the top doth scud,
There underneath the banks, then in the mud,
And with his frantic fits so scares the shoal,
That each one takes his hide or starting hole:
By this the pike, clean wearied, underneath
A willow lies."

Never did honest old Izaak Walton land a jack better than is here described. How hungry he comes up!—a snatch, and the float is over head—one pull, and the hook is in his gills. The angler gives him plenty of line, and away he goes! plashing here and there, now on the surface, then plunging down fathoms deep, and affrighting every minnow in the stream, until weak and wearied he is brought up under the twisted root of an old willow, and needs not even a landing net to turn up his silver belly on the velvet sward. Not that, after all, we should like to trust one of our fingers in his jaws—sharp teeth have those voracious jacks, in their crocodile-shaped heads. Here follows a few beautiful lines on

YOUNG BIRDS.

"As little wrens but newly fledge,
First by their nests, hop up and down the hedge;
Then one from bough to bough gets up a tree,
His fellow noting his agility,
Thinks he as well may venture as the other,
So fluskering from one spray to another
Gets to the top, and then emboldened flies
Unto an height past ken of human eyes."

Our next extracts shall be brief and various, for we have a great wish to make our readers fall in love with this old, and almost forgotten poet.

VILLAGE WEDDING.

"I oft have seen upon a bridal-day
Full many maids clad in their best array,

In honour of the bride come with their flaskets
Filled full of flowers ; others in wicker baskets
Bring from the marish rushes, to o'erspread
The ground whereon to church the lovers tread :
Whilst that the quaintest youth of all the train
Ushers their way with many a piping strain."

SOLITUDE.

" Betwixt those hills had nature framed a walk,
Not over dark, nor light, in angles bending,
And like the gliding of a snake descending :
All hushed and silent as the mid of night,
No chattering pie, nor crow appeared in sight ;
But further in I heard the turtle-dove,
Singing sad dirges on her lifeless love.
Birds that compassion from the rocks could bring,
Had only licence in that place to sing,
Whose doleful notes the melancholy cat
Close in a hollow tree sat wondering at."

A RILL.

" So when the pretty rill a place espies,
Where with the pebbles she would wantonize ;
And that her upper stream so much doth wrong her,
To drive her thence and let her play no longer ;
If she with too loud murmurings ran away
As being much incensed to leave her play :
A western mild, and pretty whispering gale,
Came dallying with the leaves along the dale,
And seemed as with the water it did chide,
Because it ran so long unpacified ;
Yea, and methought it bade her leave that coil,
Or it would choak her up with leaves and foil ;
Whereat the rivulet in my mind did weep,
And hurled her head into a silent deep."

THE SEASONS.

" ——— The Year hath first his jocund Spring,
Wherein the leaves, to birds, sweet carrolling,

Dance with the wind: then seen the Summer's day
Perfect the embryo blossom of each spray:
Next cometh Autumn, when the threshēd sheaf,
Loseth his grain, and every tree his leaf:
Lastly cold Winter's rage, with many a storm,
Threats the proud pines which the high hills adorn,
And makes the sap leave succourless the shoot,
Shrinking to comfort its decaying root."

DESOLATE HOUSE.

"I sought for shelter in a ruined house,
Harbouring the weasel, and the dust-bred mouse;
And others none, except the two-kind bat
Which all the day there melancholy sat:
Here sat I down with wind and rain sore beate;
Grief fed my mind, and did my body eat."

LEAVING SCHOOL.

"As children on a play-day leave the schools,
And gladly run into the swimming pools;
Or in the thickets all with nettles stung,
Rush to despoil some sweet thrush of her young;
Or with their hats, for fish, lade in a brook
Withouten pain—but when the morn doth look
Out of the eastern gates, a snail would faster
Glide to the school, than they unto their master."

BLACKSMITH.

"As when a smith and his man, lame Vulcan's fellows,
Called from the anvil or the puffing bellows,
To clap a well-wrought shoe, for more than pay,
Upon a stubborn nag of Galloway,
Or unbacked Jennet, or a Flander's mare,
That at the forge stands snuffing up the air,
The swarthy smith spits in his buck-horn fist,
And bids his man bring out the five-fold twist,
His shackles, shacklocks, hampers, gyves, and chains—
When if a carrier's jade he brought unto him,
His man can hold his foot whilst he can shoe him."

There 's a blacksmith's fist for you! not over clean — but no matter—is it not a strong, sturdy line? you see the man whilst reading it. You would not like to have a blow from the "buck-horn fist" of the "swarthy smith;" and if you told him it was very filthy to spit in it, he would soon answer that you knew nothing of his trade; that you had never handled a smooth, bright hammer-shaft, nor had to shoe an "unbacked jennet." Look again at the description of the "Ruined House" and "Solitude," the house so ruinous that even the melancholy but clung to its rafters, and the weasel went shrieking under its rotten floors, frightening the "dust-bred mouse" again into its hole. What a place to sit down in, after having faced the cutting wind and the beating rain, which even then came thundering through the roof! to sit shivering among bats, and weasels, and rotting rafters, while grief was feeding at the heart! What a place to die in! And his Solitude, how solitary! neither "dark nor light," but gloomy as a vault; and the eyes of that wild cat burning in the old hollow tree, and looking out like a fiend upon the dusky silence: whilst amid the deep umbrage—a fitting voice for such a shadowy land—you hear the mournful cooing of a melancholy dove; the sound comes floating down those snake-like paths here and there overhung with underwood. What a place to sit in and read Macbeth! Then again, that "Rill;" what a change from the gloom and solitude we have dwelt among; fretting and playing so prettily amongst the pebbles, living and looking as innocent as a child, its waters clear and bright as the tears of a maiden! Beautiful must it have looked as it "wantonized" among those pebbles, running here and there like a gleam of light; now shaking the stem of a flower, and leaving it trembling at its own shadow, then murmuring and taking it hard to be driven on by a stronger current, that went rushing along above, and would scarcely give it time to fret out a farewell to the pleasant

companions it had been dallying with. Then the wind to come whispering its threatenings, as if to tell it that unless it moved on, and watered the neighbouring valleys, it would spoil its purity. Ah! reader, this is a sweet little allegory: a factory-child, frightened from play by his stern task-master, or any gentle-hearted human being driven from its solace and happiness by brutal power, which comes whispering at first,—no! the wind is not savage enough — but still we could twist it into a thousand shapes, and foolish comparisons, for it is indeed

> "——————— Silly sooth,
> And dallies with the innocence of love
> Like the olden times."

'Tis strange how fond we are of these quaint conceits, and have been ever since the neighbours called us "daft-looking, gauking lads, that went about with books in their fists over fields and woods, as if they meant to make away with themselves." Ay, and long before we can scarcely remember the time that a stream did not awaken pleasant or melancholy thoughts in our memories; even when we were children, we loved to watch a little spring that threw up a column of sand not higher than a daisy. If any clever person asked us why we loved it, we could not even tell them now, and yet we could talk an hour upon the matter; we loved that little spring as we yet love to hear the song of the skylark—to look upon a flower—to gaze in the sweet face of an infant, or any other such silly fondness, which we would not wish to become wise to forego, but rather stand to be laughed at and remain happy in our own blissful ignorance.

But we must speedily bring our extracts to a close, and shall therefore proceed, without further apology, well aware that their beauty will make ample recompence for the space they occupy.

MAY DAY.

" I have seen the Lady of the May
Sit in an arbour (on a holiday),
Built by the May-Pole, where the jocund swains
Dance with the maidens to the bagpipes' strains,
When envious night commands them to be gone
Call for the merry youngsters one by one,
And for their well performance soon disposes,
To this a garland interwove with roses,
To that a carved hook, or well-wrought scrip ;
Gracing another with her cherry lip ;
To one her garter, to another then
A handkerchief cast o'er and o'er again :
And none returning empty that hath spent
His pains to fill their rural merriment."

MOTHER AND CHILD.

' A mother kind, walks forth in the even,
She with her little son for pleasure given,
To tread the fringed banks of an amorous flood,
That with its music courts a sullen wood,
Where, ever talking with her only bliss,
That now before and then behind her is,
She stoops for flowers, the choicest may be had,
And bringing them to please her little lad,
Spies in his hand some baneful flower or weed
Whereon he 'gins to smell, perhaps to feed,
With a more earnest haste she runs unto him
And pulls them from him."

GIRL LEARNING MUSIC

" As when a maid taught from her mother's wing
To tune her voice unto a silver string,
When she should run she rests, rests when should run,
And ends her lesson having now begun ;

Now misseth she her stop, then in her song,
And doing her best she still again is wrong ;
Begins again, and yet again strikes false,—
Then in a chafe forsakes her virginals ;
And yet within an hour she tries anew,
That with her daily pains—art's chiefest due—
She gains that charming skill."

EVENING.

" But, maiden, see the day is waxing old,
And 'gins to shut in with the marigold ;
The neat-herd's kine do bellow in the yard,
And dairy-maidens, for the milk prepared,
Are drawing at the udder : long ere now
The ploughman hath unyoked his team from plough."

FANCY.

" To keep her slender fingers from the sun
He through the pastures oftentimes hath run
To pluck the speckled foxgloves from their stem,
And on her fingers neatly placed them.
The honeysuckles would he often strip,
And lay their sweetness on her sweeter lip,
And then, as a reward for such sweet pain,
Sip from those cherries some of it again.

* * * *

So many beauties were co-mixed in one,
That all delight were dead if she were gone.
Shepherds that in her clear eyes did delight,
Whilst they were open never held it night ;
And were they shut, although the morning gray
Called up the sun, they hardly thought it day ;
The roses on her cheeks, such at each turn
Phœbus might kiss, but had no power to burn ;
From her sweet lips distil sweets sweeter too
Than from a cherry halfway cut in two.
Some say the nimble-witted Mercury
Went late disguised, professing psalmesterie,
And milk-maid's fortunes told about the land,
Only to get a touch of her soft hand."

AUTUMN.

" In Autumn, when birds cease their notes,
And stately forests don their yellow coats,
When Ceres' golden locks are nearly shorn,
And mellow fruit from trees are roughly torn,
And little lads sit on a bank to shale
The ripened nuts, plucked in a woody vale."

SIMILE.

" He saw an elm embraced by a vine,
Clipping so strictly, that they seemed to be
One in their growth—one shade, one fruit, one tree ;
Her boughs his arms, his leaves so mixt with hers,
That with no wind he moved but straight she stirs,—
As showing all should be whom love combined."

NEGLECTED VINE.

" With hanging head I have beheld
A widow vine stand in a naked field,
Unhusbanded, neglected, all forlorn ;
Browsed on by deer, by cattle cropt and torn,
Unpropt, unsuccourēd by stake or tree,
From wreakful storms' impetuous tyranny,
When, had a willing hand lent kind redress,
Her pregnant branches might from out the press
Have sent a liquor, both for taste and show,
No less divine than those of Malligo."

NIGHT.

" The sable mantle of the silent Night
Shut from the world the ever-joysome light ;
Care fled away, and softest slumbers please
To leave the court for lowly cottages ;
Wild beasts forsook their dens on woody hills,
And sleightful otters left the purling rills ;

Rooks to their nests in high woods now were flung,
And with their spread wings shield their naked young ;
When thieves from thickets to the cross-ways stir,
And terror frights the lonely passenger ;
When nought was heard but now and then the howl
Of some vile cur, or whooping of the owl."

MORNING.

" Twice had the cock crown, and in cities strong
The bellman's doleful noise and careful song
Told men, whose watchful eyes no slumber bent,
What store of hours theft-guilty Night had spent."

DESOLATION.

" Near to the shore that bordered on the rock
No merry swain was seen to feed his flock,
No lusty neat-herd thither drove his kine,
Nor boorish hog-herd fed his rooting swine.
A stony ground it was, sweet herbage failed,
Nought there but weeds, which Limos, strongly nailed,
Tore from their mother's breast to stuff his maw ;
No crab-tree bore his load, nor thorn his haw :
As in a forest well complete with deer,
We see the hollies, ashes, everywhere
Robbed of their clothing by the browsing game ;
So, near the rock, all trees, where'er you came,
To cold December's wrath stood void of bark.
Here danced no nymph, *no early rising lark*
Sung up the ploughman and his drowsy mate :
All round the rock was bare and desolate."

LOVERS PARTING.

" Look as a lover, with a lingering kiss,
About to part with the best half that 's his ;
Fain would he stay, but that he fears to do it,
And curseth time for so fast hastening to it ;
Now takes his leave, and yet begins anew
To make less vows than are esteemed true ;

Then says, he must be gone, and then doth find
Something he should have spoke that 's out of mind ;
And whilst he stands to look for it in her eyes,
Their sad sweet glance so tie his faculties,
To think from what he parts, that he is now
As far from leaving her, or knowing how,
As when he came ; begins his former strain,
To kiss, to vow, and take his leave again ;
Then turns, comes back, sighs, pants, and yet doth go,
Apt to retire, and loath to leave her so :—
So part I."

And so part we with reluctance from our task, not having quoted half the passages we had marked. But we have done enough to call attention to the writings of this sterling old English author, and have no doubt but that we shall soon see a cheap reprint of his works; for we are certain that they are calculated both to amend the head and heart.

Our extracts have not been fairly made, as we have attempted to give those which bear upon rural scenery, rather than such as are marked by their general bearing in the work, and the harmony of their connection. Thus we have been compelled to break the sweet links of his song, and very often to add a word or two of our own, to bring in the passages best suited for our purpose. We have, however, done a duty which we felt bound to accomplish ; and although we are certain that it required abler hands than our own for such a task, yet have we done it to the best of our ability, conscious that, whatever may be the results, we mean well to our readers and the public.

Although we have not always made such quotations as our own judgment pointed out as the best, yet we do think, among those which we have selected, passages will be found of great and varied power ; such as will prove that the author is a true genius, and that, if even he possesses nothing more, he is worthy of being placed

among the best of our pastoral and rural poets. His close observation of nature we have in many instances so clearly pointed out, that no one can mistake the beauty of the passages. We could have been content to have read his works—to have taken them out with us into the fields and there enjoyed their beauties alone, had we not felt it a duty to make others partakers of our enjoyment, and do something towards bringing about a more pure taste for poetry. We know our own position well; for, humble as it is, it gives us the power of doing either good or evil, to a limited extent; and we would not be numbered amongst those who labour without an object;—and shall be disappointed if we do not make our readers acquainted with "Britannia's Pastorals and the Shepherd's Pipe," written by the almost forgotten William Browne.

THE GAMEKEEPER'S HUT.

Oh! she was good as she was fair,
None—none on earth above her!
As pure in thought as angels are:
To know her was to love her.

ROGERS'S *Jacqueline.*

IT has been one of my chief objects in this volume to give as much variety to the matter as I well could, that every reader might find something to suit his own particular taste. In my present sketch I purpose to give a simple love-story—a tale of a youth and a maiden who passed most of their hours in an old wood, and lived almost as secluded as ring-doves. He was one of those whom Fate seemed to have ordained for great things; then given up, as if she shrunk from

fulfilling his destiny. But he is gone, like a flower which the river sweepeth away, and leaveth to perish on some untrodden margin; and she is also dead.

Strange was their meeting. He had wandered into the old wood to read Shakspeare's "*Tempest,*" for the first time. Oh! how I envy the youth who has never read the *Tempest*, and has such a wood as that to wander in, with the soul of a poet to enjoy its inimitable beauties! One who can fancy that the rustling of the leaves is the sound of the ocean, — that the singing of the birds is the wild music that floated around that lonely island,—that the gloomy glen is the cavern in which Prospero and Miranda dwelt, and the barking of the fox the sound of Caliban's voice grumbling in the distance.

The day had been sultry, and the evening came in still and close and airless; one of those breathless evenings in summer which precede a storm; when the hushed air by its silence seems to herald in the rain and thunder. Nor was it long before the storm arose, and the youth started at the first loud peal that rang through the forest; for the tempest which Shakspeare had conjured up still went sounding through his ears, nor did he awake to a full consciousness of its reality, until the rain came tearing down like a mountain torrent, and the thunder went growling over the gloomy glen; while the red-winged lightning flew like a fiery dragon between the huge trees.

On, however, the youth bore through the tangling brambles and the wet underwood, sometimes threading his way through the drenched and reed-like grass; then bringing down another shower around him as he brushed through the broad-leafed hazels, until he came to where two foot-paths branched off in different directions, and while hesitating which of them to pursue, he was startled by the appearance of a man. The stranger wore a long-frock, and carried a long staff in his

hand, and while the youth gazed upon him and his dog, he thought how Prospero had often wandered through such solitudes with the savage Caliban following at his heels, only kept in subjection by the mysterious wand which he wielded. But the stranger spoke not of "cloud-capped towers, gorgeous palaces, nor solemn temples," but kindly invited him into his hut until the storm abated.

Wild as the cave of Prospero was that sylvan shed into which the worthy Gamekeeper invited his guest: the green Dryads of the wood had thrown their wildest garlands around it, and over its thatched and turf-like roof cast many a wild plant, which grew in a thousand fanciful forms, some hanging from the eaves and swinging in the air, while others hung in fantastic curls, and formed a green and natural curtain before the diamond-shaped lattice. Logs of wood were placed in regular layers before the hut, and the youth half-averted his head, as he entered, to look for Ferdinand, for he thought he yet might have "some thousands of those logs to pile up, upon a sore injunction."

The poet entered the cave, for such his fancy deemed it; and never did a lovelier vision burst upon human eye than that which rose before him; like Ferdinand did he gaze upon it wonder-struck; for never did mortal form appear so like a goddess, nor could the fair daughter of the lonely island look lovelier than did that Miranda of the wood. Then stole forth the bubbling honey of her speech, like the murmurs of Hybla, making the senses drowsy beneath their melodies; and the light leaped brighter in her eyes when she found that her father was not very wet; and she reached the youth a chair, casting her glance in modest guise upon the floor while she invited him to be seated; then she threw more logs upon the fire, which, when they burnt,

"Did seem to weep for having wearied her."

Margaret's was a beauty that can only be dreamed of; it was so shy, so wild and untrained, and had such a forest and flowery look about it, that it seemed not formed to gaze upon, but, like the graceful and skipping fawn, was only born to show itself now and then in some picturesque opening of the wood, then bound away, and appear again just where the sunlight broke upon the patch of velvet-green beyond the glade in the distance: or like some wood-nymph, made to fly with her hands crossed arch-wise above her head, and her long hair flowing loose, while her azure drapery, floating cloud-like, fluttered at intervals between the sounding of her low laughter, as she shot through the deep umbrage. Never had poet in his happiest mood conjured up a fairer form, when, stretched by green and flowery banks, he heard the brawling brook babbling to itself, as he turned his eye skyward, and, in the shifting light and quivering sunbeams, saw angelic shapes passing to and fro between himself and the clouds.

Happy was the young poet that the storm had driven him into so sweet a shelter, and the presence of such beauty. Her father was well read in Shakspeare, and she also was familiar with the immortal Bard, and many a sweet smile lighted up her beautiful brows, when the youth compared their hut to Prospero's cave, and the sounds which broke around them in the forest to Ariel's voice. Then the old Gamekeeper fell in with the humour of his guest, and calling his lovely daughter Miranda, bade her bring forth a cup of the oldest ale; then patted his shaggy "Caliban," which lay outstretched on the hearth, saying, that while he basked there he was in no danger of being "frighted with urchin shows, or pitched i' the mire, nor would any hedge-hog lie tumbling in his foot-way, and mount their pricks up at him." Then the youth gazed fondly upon the woodland

beauty, and thought how pleasant it would be to wander with her through

> " —— Each lane, and every alley green,
> Dingle, or bushy dell of that wild wood,
> And every bosky bourn from side to side ;"

to lead her to " the best springs ; to pluck her berries ; to gather wood for her ; bring her where the crabs grew, and the clustering filberts hung ; to show her a jay's nest," or sit down beside her in a wood " so full of noises, sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not."

So the evening passed in calm enjoyment, over which was thrown a dreamy pleasure : for a bright vision of beauty then filled the youthful poet's soul ; the image of Margaret had imprinted itself upon his heart ; every word she uttered sank like the feeling of rich music into his bosom, and went thrilling through his whole frame, for never had such beauty met his eye,

> " So perfect and so peerless, as if created
> Of every creature's best."

The moonlight broke brightly upon the wild wood-paths when he departed, and where the summer-rain hung upon the gorse and bracken, it glittered like beads of purest pearl. The silence of the forest seemed to fall more holy upon his heart, through having discovered the treasure enshrouded amid its solitude ; and every tall tree as it waved adieu seemed more lovely than before, since it skreened the abode of one so peerless.

Lightly beat the lover's heart as he journeyed homeward, and, kindled with the new sensations which it had received, sent a wild glow of delight over him—the roseate breaking of the morning of love—the rising sun of a new era in his life. The last words he heard her utter were, " good night," and every step he took seemed to ring back the sound, every

bough that waved seemed to whisper it; he saw her face in the moon; the stars bore a soft resemblance to her eyes; her shadow swept over the long grass; her voice was ever sounding in his ears. A new world had opened before him, and feelings to which he had hitherto been a stranger had taken a firm hold of his soul; his heart tingled as it never before had done, saving when the bursting pathos of poetry struck through and was felt in every vein; then indeed he knew that love and poetry were divine, and each alike held power over the heart.

The youth walked along, and Margaret's eyes ever seemed to haunt him as he went, laughing through their silken lashes as if they had no more care than the stars, and only looked on him because they had no other object to rest upon. He was in love, deeply and madly in love; for first love is but the true happiness of madness, when heart, and soul, and mind, are all lost in absorbing passion. The moon rode high in the midnight of Heaven when he regained his home; he lifted the latch of his cottage-door noiselessly; he glided to his couch silent as a shadow, and the crimson dawn broke blushing through the wakeful east ere he fell asleep. But his was no tranquil slumber—the dreamy poetry of Shakspeare and the fair form of Margaret reigned over the wide empire of sleep, the cloudy curtaining that fell over his eyelids but unrolled itself to develope the figures which were inwrought thereon, and which his fancy had created.

The lover dreamed that he was wrecked on a wild seashore; he heard the breakers roaring on the rocky coast, and the voices of mariners in distress; and when these sounds glided away, he heard wild music in the air, floating high above the tall green rocks, until it was lost amid the silvery-bosomed clouds, which had broken through the dark rack to listen to that harmony. Then came Ariel's voice singing snatches of wild sea-songs, but in a tone of voice

that sounded like Margaret's. Anon the scene changed, and he became a forester, and lived in the sylvan cottage with the fair maiden whose form had haunted his slumber; he saw her face in the ivied porch waiting his return, and as she rushed out to meet him, she fell over her father's bleeding corse. He uttered a loud shriek and awoke. The sun broke brightly upon his white window-blinds when he arose, and the shadow of the old willow that grew without, threw its chequered and waving branches on the curtain, and the long-leaves moved to and fro with a gentle and pleasing motion, and chased away the remembrance of the awful vision which had awoke him.

How light seemed the poet's labour on the following day! a pleasant employment, like his who toils up some steep hill and is rewarded with a view of the sweetest of prospects when he has gained the summit; for he knew that the perusal of Shakspeare, a visit to the wood, and above all, an interview with Margaret, would be his reward in the evening, for the kind Gamekeeper had invited him to call whenever he had leisure. Love reigns not in all bosoms alike; where, however, it does really exist there can be no affectation; and trebly guarded must that bosom be which can long conceal it; for like a plant, which although we cannot see how it grows, yet a few congenial days soon show the progress it has made, and we know for certain that it increases rapidly, though unobserved by human eye. So progressed the poet's love, growing on with a power of which he was scarcely conscious, and only weighing upon him heavily when he was unsunned by the light of his wood-nymph's eyes.

An unmeet wooer would he have been in princely halls, amid crimson ottomans and the waving folds of silken drapery, and floors on which the feet tread without awakening a sound; where beauty sits stately and erect, and innocence is

schooled into a thousand false and foolish forms, and nature only rendered unnatural ;—an unmeet wooer would he have been for scenes like these. But in those old parks, where the antlered deer browse, where the clouds sleep mirrored in the deep and clear waters, and the trees cast a green twilight upon the flowers that grow under them ; there could he have made the proud bosom of beauty glow, while he told how Juliet loved, and Viola won another, while she concealed her own passion ; how Ophelia was drowned in a brook when the "envious sliver" snapped ; and how poor Barbara went singing, "willow, willow," with her head hanging on one, side until the love-lorn maiden's sorrow pierced the tender heart of Desdemona.

But the age of romance is gone, the gloomy grandeur of chivalry is faded away, or can only be recalled to flicker out its feeble flame for a short hour in the brief pages of a few dreamers like myself. The Great Magician, whose wand waved the past ages into life, is dead, and his magic rod

"Buried deeper than did ever plummet sound."

The days are gone in which the bard struck his harp in beauty's bower, and the high-born damsel sighed in the pale moonlight for a home with the minstrel page. The banner which waved on the high keep has long since mouldered away ;—the grating chains of the drawbridge, the thunder of the portcullis as it fell, the sound of the trumpet that

"Spake to wake the armed throng,"

will never again be heard ;—the clanking mail of the warrior has sent its last echo under the gloomy and vaulted gateway.

The nightingale alone sings as sweetly in the deep forests as of old, and sends its music over the ruined mound on

which the grey fortress stood, as blithely now, as when the harp sounded in the hall, and the chorus of the wassailers echoed over the moonlit moat, and the warder kept march to their rude melody.

So time glides ; — so must it be supposed to have glided over a short space of our story, — a few glad meetings and silent partings, when the heart was too full to utter all it felt, and the lips closed of their own accord upon the confession, and the downcast glance was too modest to look boldly where it loved. It was a sweet evening towards the close of summer, when the young poet, as usual, wandered to the sylvan hut; it was just at that season when the glaring green on the trees becomes subdued, but is scarcely touched by the yellow-handed autumn — when the corn begins to whisper to the breeze that steps lightly above it, but has not caught that clear, sharp rustling which it attains when fully ripe. It was the season when summer is shorn of its sweetness,—when the rich bean and clover fields have ceased to throw out their fragrance, and the new hay no longer makes the air redolent with its balmy odour. On such an evening did he reach the lonely hut, and Margaret sat sewing beneath the ivied porch, and carolling an old English ballad to herself, as if she were the only song-bird left to awaken the woods with music; for many a feathered chorister that had built and sung around her woodland home had gone in search of another summer beyond the seas. William inquired if her father was in, and was told, in a voice all music, that he had gone his usual rounds in the wood, having waited some time for his company; but that now her father had come, she would walk with him,—and she stepped inside to reach down her gipsy bonnet, and it was soon placed above the bright brown ringlets that fell in rich profusion over her graceful shoulders, and cast a soft shadow over the loveliest eyes that ever bent

down to gaze upon a violet. On they went, arm-in-arm, by a wild wood-path that wound beside a brawling brook, and here and there murmured as it stole away over the clear smooth pebbles, then rolled noiselessly as sleep along, beneath the shadows of the overhanging trees, the boughs of which now and then waved and whispered above, while a low fluttering went along the foliage of the underwood. The stream reflected back the image of her beauty, as it also caught the rays of the sinking sun, which was then fast verging to the west,—and while she paused to watch the few flowers that were swayed idly to and fro by the current, she seemed as if mirrored upon a fountain of molten gold. Sometimes the wind paused, as if to dally with her long ringlets, then stole away again, after having swept them across the budding roses of her lips, or thrown them upon the struggling and delicate crimson of her cheeks.

As the lovers wandered along by the stream, the path became so narrow that they could no longer walk together, and Margaret passed on a few paces before him. A bramble had arched its armed neck across the winding walk, and while stooping to remove it a thorn lodged in her finger; a rude bench stood at a little distance, and seating herself upon it, she held out her hand to William, who quickly, and without causing her much pain, extracted the sharp intruder. Still her hand remained inclosed within his, nor did she withdraw it, — and for several moments they sat listening to the low plashing of the stream and the louder beating of each other's hearts, until his arm gently enfolded her slender waist, and she sank her face upon his shoulder, to conceal the deep blushes with which it had become suffused. Then came a faint whispering — a low exchange of names,— but so feeble that it scarcely rose above the drowsy murmurs of the stream, as if "William" and "Margaret" had un-

consciously escaped from each other's lips,—had been rather thought than said—the unpremeditated utterance of the heart which spoke in that deep interchange of love.

But what boots it here to record the gentle vows they swore and the tender confessions they made?—their witnesses were the green trees and the deep brook, that seemed to roll more subdued as it flashed back their images, until the dim twilight came,

"And one blue sky bent over all."

Their love was as pure as aught that is allied to mortality; they confessed it and felt no shame, for neither bosom entertained a thought but what might have been uttered before the holy altar and breathed amid the tenderest prayer that ever went from the soul to Heaven. Alas! for the present state of society, that love is but considered as a phantom—a something that is believed to exist in the imagination, but laughed at if told that it is rooted in the heart. Love, which sprang from Heaven, and even peoples Heaven itself—which is the source of life, and the only true earthly happiness—how is it treated now? How careful the wealthy man is in the choice of his horses! he spares no expense if he can but get them of a first-rate quality, if they are equally marked and correspond in size. But it too often happens that he bestows not half that care in the choice of his wife; if she is but rich, all is right—he marries her for her money alone; his favourite greyhound occupies more of his thoughts, after marriage, than his wife. How often do you see some beautiful young woman hanging on the arm of a husband old enough to be her father, one whose years more than double the number of her own. True, he is rich, and she wants not for wealth; carriages and servants are ever at her beck; gay assemblies, routs, balls, and theatres, she can command,— to these she is compelled

to fly; happiness she never knows; and she chases the phantom pleasure from day to day, that she may forget the miseries that hang around her home. Expose a beautiful summer plant to the cold winds of winter and it dies,—transplant a tree to a hard, uncongenial soil, and it will soon wither and perish;—why then should the affections be planted in a soil in which they cannot flourish? why the human race be forced on in an unnatural and inhuman manner, as if mankind ought only to be forced into an existence against their nature, and the world here and hereafter be peopled with less care than our gardens are planted?*

In the solitude of nature love reigns unmolested, amid the rustling of green boughs, the cooing of ring-doves, and the low murmuring of streams. What high-born maiden

* Since writing the above, I chanced to stumble upon Mrs. Jameson's admirable work, entitled, "Winter Studies and Summer Rambles," and was so struck with the superior manner in which she has taken up this subject, that I could not refrain from presenting my readers with the following extract, although conscious that it will throw into shade all I have said on the matter.

"Strange, and passing strange, that the relation between the two sexes—the passion of love, in short—should not be taken into deeper consideration by our teachers and our legislators. People educate and legislate as if there were no such thing in the world; but ask the priest—ask the physician—let them reveal the amount of moral and physical results from this one cause. Must love be always discussed in blank verse, as if it were a thing to be played in tragedies or sung in songs—a subject for pretty poems and wicked novels, and had nothing to do with the prosaic current of our every-day existence, our moral welfare and eternal salvation? Must love be ever treated with profaneness as a mere illusion? or with coarseness, as a mere impulse? or with fear, as a mere disease? or with shame, as a mere weakness? or with levity, as a mere accident? Whereas it is a great mystery and a great necessity, lying at the foundation of human existence, morality, and happiness — mysterious, universal, inevitable as death. Why, then

could close her ears when seated on a flowery bank in the dark centre of an old wood? with one at her side who had wandered through the dreamy realms of poetry, and could tell how the lovely Una, once seated by her milk-white lamb, sighed for her knight in the lonely forest; — how lovely Eve appeared when she wandered alone through the bowers of Eden, and taught the clustering jasmines to climb around the stems of the roses of Paradise; — how Pluto became enamoured of Proserpine, as she bowed her fair form to gather lilies in the golden valleys of Enna; and how Jove came floating like a swan, arching the silver of his neck, and enfolding Leda in his snowy pinions. Wonder not then, while such tales have sunk into the hearts of those whose footsteps were trained to walk in the halls of palaces, they should fall deeply into the soul of a forester's daughter — one who was brought up in the solitude of a

should love be treated less seriously than death? It is as serious a thing. Love and death, the alpha and omega of human life, the author and finisher of existence, the two points on which God's universe turns; which He, our Father and Creator, has placed beyond our arbitration — beyond the reach of that election and free will which he has left us in all other things! Death must come, and love must come; but the state in which they find us? — whether blinded, astonished, and frightened, and ignorant, or, like reasonable creatures, guarded, prepared, and fit to manage our own feelings?—this, I suppose, depends on ourselves; and, for want of such self-management and self-knowledge, look at the evils that ensue—hasty, improvident, unsuitable marriages; repining, diseased, or vicious celibacy; irretrievable infamy; cureless insanity. The death that comes early, and the love that comes late, reversing the primal laws of our nature. It is of little consequence how unequal the conventional difference of rank, as in Germany—how equal the condition, station, and means, as in America—if there be inequality between the sexes; and if the sentiment which attracts and unites them to each other, and the contracts and relations springing out of this sentiment, be not equally well understood by both, equally sacred by both, equally binding on both."

wild wood, nursed amid the poetry of Shakspeare, and loved by one who well could revel amid the beauties of the mighty bard.

After-years rolled by, and shook a thousand cares from their gloomy wings as they passed; but never did their terrible shadow totally darken the lover's remembrance of that summer evening — never erase the recollection of those sunbeams that crimsoned the brook, and threw an ethereal flush over the bank of flowers on which he was seated with Margaret, when they plighted their first vows of love beneath the old tree, and, sealing them with a holy kiss, defied all but death to separate them. 'Tis useless to dwell upon their frequent interviews, all alike unclouded by a care; days and weeks and months glided away happily, and the wood-cottage was ever open to him. Summer was over and gone, and the solemn gold of autumn had illuminated the forest-trees: then came the dark nights of winter, but they prevented him not from visiting Margaret and her father.

It was one clear starlight evening, just before Christmas, that William reached the cottage, and found Margaret alone; she appeared dejected, and expressed her fears at her father's long absence. It was not unusual for him to go out late, but his rounds seldom exceeded an hour; and she had just cause for alarm then, for men's voices had been heard in the wood, and the barking of dogs; and as her father had been the means of bringing several of the most notorious poachers to justice, she felt afraid that at the first opportunity they would be revenged. After such information William lost no time in setting out to search for him; he used all the arguments he could to dissuade Margaret from accompanying him, but they were useless, for she replied, that as they shared each other's love, so ought they to share all dangers. She had often been with him on

similar occasions, but that night he felt unaccountably low-spirited, a kind of ominous foreboding that something was about to happen.

They wandered along, arm-in-arm, in silence—once or twice William attempted to start a conversation, but a heaviness sat upon each of their hearts. He took Margaret's hand in his—it was cold as death, and trembled violently. They traversed the margin of the wood-stream, which was swollen greatly, owing to the late showers. It was only by the utmost caution that they were enabled to proceed. They arrived to where a fallen tree had hitherto formed a rude bridge across the brook; but that night it had been removed, and they were compelled to traverse more than half-a-mile out of their way to reach the wood gate, which was generally the extent of her father's round. Their journey would have been much more dangerous had the trees been in their full foliage; but, with the exception of here and there a few dark fir-trees, a straggling holly, or the boughs of an oak mantled with clustering ivy, the clear stars glimmered between the ramifications of the branches, making a dim uncertain light, just sufficient to point out sundry marks, which they well knew, and which enabled them to take a right course.

At length their ears were arrested by a deep moan. "O God! it is my father!" shrieked Margaret, and fainted in her lover's arms. He had no alternative but to lie her gently as he could among the wet fern and long withered grass (an unfitting couch for one so lovely), and hurry to the left, among the thick bracken and underwood, from whence the sound issued. He had not gone many yards, before he discovered her father in a state of insensibility, and bleeding profusely from the head. He tore off his neckerchief and bound it tightly round the Gamekeeper's forehead, then ran back to arouse Margaret to assist him.

"Is he dead?" said Margaret, recovering from her painful swoon, with more energy than he had anticipated. William replied "No;" and that word gave her new life, for her own feelings were conquered in the anxiety she felt for her father. She drew his head to her bosom as she knelt upon the damp earth; she kissed his pallid lips, and called him by many a tender name, but received no answer. The old wood rang back her accents in a thousand echoes; and his faithful dog, which had never left him, howled frightfully at intervals; but the hoary trees and the silent sky were the only witnesses of their misery. The feelings with which they bore him home we will not dwell upon,—Necessity is a stern task-master. Many a time were they compelled to rest in spots where they had spent their happiest hours—trees by the mossy stems of which they had read Shakspeare together, and dells where they had sat for hours listening to the sweet pipings of the birds. How long and drearily appeared that space, which they had so often traversed without thinking of its distance from the cottage! But "love is stronger than death;" and Margaret evinced a power which nothing but danger could have called forth—a more than mortal strength for one so delicately formed —an energy which had summoned her whole soul to action. But we will not pain our readers with a description. With heavy hearts they laid her father on his couch: once he opened his eyes—it was but for a moment, as if the glare of the candles had produced the effect, but in that short moment he had recognised them, and grasping each of their hands, he placed them together with a feeble pressure. He attempted to speak, but his voice was inaudible, but from the motion of his lips, and the gathering of a broken whisper, he seemed to say, "God bless you!"—and then expired.

"He 's dead!" exclaimed Margaret, and throwing herself upon the body, with loud lamentings, she called wildly

upon her father to take her with him to her mother in heaven. — Pardon her, ye rulers of the land, if, in the misery of her heart, she thought harshly of those laws ye have formed which cause men to shed blood even for the value of a hare.

I am no advocate for poachers intruding upon the private parks and woods set apart for your own sports, but oh! let the wild heaths and the free hills be open, as they were in the days of yore. Let there be a few places where the lowly hunter may tread without the fear of prisons. Turn back only for the last ten years, and see how many fair children have been left fatherless through the game-laws; what weeping babes and broken-hearted mothers have they left in misery; what lovely forms have they made wretched, and bosoms throb with agony, innocent as poor Margaret's!

That night William left her not, but sat with his face buried in his hands, his heart shaking with painful emotion, as her deep sobbings and loud wailing, by fits and starts, broke the awful silence of the apartment. Desolate indeed was her situation; she had no kindred whom she knew, no one but him to fly to for shelter and consolation. 'Twas madness but to think of one so young and innocent dwelling alone in that solitary cottage, in the dreary depth of a wood. Then he brooded over his own circumstances, and sighed again for that plenty which was once the lot of his fathers. Then he reproached himself for repining, when he saw how nobly his widowed mother bore her poverty, although nursed in the lap of affluence. What plans floated before him that night, all formed for the future happiness of Margaret! "I am young," thought he, "and can labour; what matter if it be for twenty hours in the day, so long as I shall have four to pass with her? Did I not at the first interview wish that I was Ferdinand, and had to bear logs through the long summer's day, so that I

might share her company at night? Alas! Prospero was living then, and his magic wand could make the barren wastes of poverty change to beautiful valleys, rich in fruits and flowers. Now indeed the island is desolate, and the poor dog looks more wretched than Caliban. No, we have no cave to fly to for shelter, although Ferdinand and Miranda loved not more fervently than we. Alas! the wand of Death has waved away all our hopes, and changed our beautiful island to a barren rock, around which a wild sea rolls, whose shores are lost in darkness, and on which Hope unfurls not her white sails."

Poor Margaret!—he tried to soothe her, but all in vain; she only threw her head upon his bosom to weep the more, and they mingled the bitterness of their tears together, until the pale rays of daylight fell upon their paler cheeks.

Another day passed away, and strange faces were gathered around the wood-cottage, and the slow tolling of a bell was heard through the forest, and then a group moved slowly along under the naked trees, bearing the dead to his last home.

Margaret hung upon William's arm without shedding a tear. There was no sound heard as they moved along, saving the tread of their measured footsteps, crackling along the frosty forest-paths — her grief "lay too deep for tears." They bore him to the picturesque church of Lea, that stands upon its little hill, surrounded with old trees, looking for miles over the low marshes. They saw him consigned to his "narrow house," heard that last awful sound when the earth fell hollow on the coffin-lid, hiding both name and age for ever. They saw the villagers depart one by one, casting a pitying look upon poor Margaret as they turned away; but she stood in silence by her lover's side, until the old sexton had completed his task, had levelled the roof of his last bed with the spade, and gone away.

It was night before they quitted the churchyard: they returned not to the hut, for William had persuaded her to accompany him to his mother's: the old dog followed them. Their course lay through the wood, and they wandered along in the cold and silent moonlight over those very paths where they had spent their happiest hours. They traversed the winding way beside the water-course, until they came to the rude bench where they had exchanged their vows of love. The night was bitter cold; there was a freezing look upon the sky, as if even the stars were afraid to look out through the frosty heavens. Desolate, however, as the scene was, they sat down side by side on the rustic seat; the very landscape seemed to share the loneliness of their feelings; the stream rolled along with a deep, sluggish, and melanchely sound; while the bare trees shook their naked arms to the cutting wind, and the frosted reeds grated their icy heads together, with a sharp, piercing, and forlorn noise that seemed to enter the very heart. The hand of Margaret—which was grasped in that of her lover—was cold as death. William drew her face to his own, and imprinted a kiss on her pallid lips,—but a kiss so cold and hopeless,—such as we might imprint on the lips of those who are about to leave us for ever—such as we should give to the dead, ere the coffin-lid closes them from our view,—so like the melancholy pressure that we give to the marble image of one we have loved, when the cold stone seems to return it, and sends back its chilly embrace into the depths of the heart. Oh! how holy a thing is the sorrow of love! the deep river of grief that rolls its chilly surges over the affections, leaving them cold and benumbed below, and dashing over the heart with a forlorn roar, like the last sound of the deafening billows that gather over the head of the sinking seaman, who has just before seen his only son perish in the same watery grave.

There they sat, and mingled their tears together, amid the solitude and silence of that old wood, until "with faltering steps and slow" they departed, and William conducted her to his mother's home.—But why dwell upon the restless nights and days of sorrow which she underwent?—the hand of death was upon her; grief was feeding at her heart; Despair seemed to stand ever before her with finger pointed to the grave, as if there alone she could find rest.

After some days they removed Margaret again to the wood-cottage, for at times she seemed unconscious of what had happened; and one who had seen her actions, when first she returned, could never have deemed that a being so lovely was bereft of reason: there was such a connectedness in her wildest ravings, and such deep meanings hanging about all she uttered. William placed a chair against the window, and sitting down, drew her gently towards it. It had beforetime been a favourite corner with them, for they had often sat there together, watching the timid hares and lordly pheasants as they stole across the footpath. Suddenly she sprang up, as she had often done when her father had appeared, and brought blushes to their cheeks. She stood as if listening, but no footstep sounded; nothing was heard but the ticking of the old clock, or the roar of the wind among the trees. At length the dog came pawing at the door, which was opened. Margaret gazed fixedly upon him; she knew that he had never returned without her father. "We will go meet him," said she, and put on her bonnet, as she had done hundreds of times before, when they had gone in search of him together. The dog followed; he made no cheerful plunges into the thicket, neither did he bark, but walked behind, like a mourner. There are feelings which words can scarcely describe; such were William's when walking by the shadow of his former Margaret, through those well-known scenes, where every tree, and dell,

and dingle, were as familiar as the faces of old friends. He suffered much after her death,—trod every avenue of that old wood alone at midnight, and has oft fallen asleep upon her grave in the cold starlight, wearied with the weight of sorrow; but never did he feel such pangs as when walking with her to search for him who was sleeping in his dark grave. But we will not recount the hours that he watched by her side, even until returning reason had assumed its seat; nor how resigned she became before her death, and only wished to recover, that she might live to see her lover happy. Fully conscious of what had befallen her father, she calmly awaited the approach of death, never murmuring, but looking firmly upon the future with a brow unblanched, only weeping when her thoughts turned upon their loves.

Reader, my tale is told:—the cold earth has long been Margaret's resting-place. As for her lover, he was delirious for many days: they say he called on her name in sleep, and went out to seek her in the darkness, as if he had lost something which had long formed a part of himself;—like the ivy that rears its head upward, even when the tree is felled to which it had twined, he wanted something to cling to,—he felt lonely and desolate.

Last summer I visited Margaret's grave;—years have passed away since she died—it was covered with daisies—a blackbird was singing in the churchyard. I had heard such a song many a time when I passed her and William in the wood. I sat beside her grassy hillock; my mind traversed the scenes of by-gone days. Margaret was slumbering beneath me—I leaned my elbow upon her grave, over that heart whose last beatings were filled with love!

I wandered along over those well-known hills. I entered the old wood,—the cottage where Margaret had lived was in ruins, the little garden was filled with weeds, gorse and fern

had grown over her flower-bed; I started a fox from the deep bracken: I turned away and sought out their favourite walk —the stream was still there, but it seemed not to have such music in its murmurs as of yore; there was a sound of wailing woe in its waters, or it might be my own fancy. I sat down in a deep hollow—it was covered with blue-bells; there had I often passed Margaret and her lover when they went forth to gather flowers to adorn her cottage. Not one did I remove; the spot was sacred to me; there was a spirit in the place, a holy silence that sank into my heart. "Alas!" exclaimed I, turning away, "how uncertain are all earthly pleasures! The golden ringlets that Time seems to wear turn grey while we admire them. We toss his glass to one another in merriment, never deeming that we give speed to its sand. We throw his scythe among the flowers, while we play, forgetting that it is sharp. We are like children who wander onward over pleasant fields, never dreaming of the distance that lies between them and their homes, until the night overtakes them."

A STRAY CHAPTER.

Raptured he quits each dozing sage,
Oh, woman! for thy lovelier page!
Sweet book! unlike the books of art,
Whose errors are thy fairest part!
In whom the dear errata column,
Is the best page in all the volume!

MOORE.

How different is the life that a woman leads in the country compared with that spent in a town; the former, if even her husband has but a very moderate income, possesses many enjoyments which the latter seldom attains, unless she be placed even beyond middling circumstances. The London women think it a great treat to spend only a day in the country; to reach Norwood or Greenwich—to take tea at some little roadside cottage, where a board is displayed announcing, "Tea made or water boiled;" to them this is a rural treat, a matter to be talked of for days after, when they have returned to their close streets and unhealthy rooms. In the country, "kith and kin" are dispersed in the neighbouring villages; relations meet each other oftener; their visits are extended for a week or two; they have generally plenty of room to accommodate their friends; the children can run on the common, in the garden, or the fields—there is no fear of their being lost. In London, if one party visits another (I speak of those in very moderate circumstances), they are all crammed

together in one room; perhaps the party visited lives in lodgings: the children are not permitted to go out for fear of being run over; or they have a bit of a yard to run in (miscalled a garden), where there is scarcely room to "swing a cat;" where clothes are hung to dry, and often washed over again before night, so thickly are they blackened with falling soot. Thousands of women in London are compelled to do their washing in the small rooms in which they live; and in wet weather to dry their clothes in the same apartments. In the country this is seldom the case, even in what is called wet weather; for only let there come on an interval of dryness, if it be but for an hour or two, and there is so much fresh air, that comes sweeping over the wide heaths and broad meadows, that they are dry in "next to no time," to use one of their own phrases. In London, very few of the "middling sort" of houses have boilers and ovens; they rarely know what it is to eat a bit of "home-made bread," to enjoy the luxury of a "baked potato" on a cold night, or a hot cake of their own making; all these things must be done by the baker; and the price of fuel causes the charges to come high; we pay twopence for a dinner baking, which in the country is charged but one halfpenny.

In the country, the meanest cottage has generally an oven and boiler, such is also the case in the small market towns: as to buying bread ready made, they rarely think of such a thing; they generally bake once a week, and on "baking days" have a few "yeast dumplings," and hot cakes for tea; to eat baker's bread, they say, "is like eating money, it 's so swift." In London, you have to "put your hand in your pocket," as the saying is, for everything you want: coals are very dear—fire-wood the same; milk is high and often very inferior; butter fetches a great price, and is sold by the regular pound; rents are enormous; and potatoes

double the price that they are in the agricultural districts. To a family fresh from the country these things appear serious; they have perhaps been used to live in a good-sized house, for which they paid ten pounds a-year; in London they pay twenty for one much less: in summer time they bought their butter for sixpence or sevenpence a-pound, each pound generally weighing twenty ounces; here they must pay a shilling or fourteen-pence for anything good, and have but sixteen ounces to the pound. Coal, too, is also much dearer than what it is in the midland counties; there they pay eightpence or ninepence per hundred weight: in London, to buy it in small quantities, the price is double. Milk they could almost have for "an old song;" often a pint of the very best for a halfpenny—not half-and-half and sky-blue, but such as the cow had given that fed on cowslips and such sweet grass, that a town-smoked gentleman would almost be tempted to gather a salad out of it. As to firewood—every lane and hedge and forest-side abounds with it: and it is wonderful to see what large lumps of dry bread the children will eat after they have been out a few hours to gather their pinafores full of sticks; beside, if you are compelled to buy it, you obtain as much for a penny as will, with care, last a whole week. Potatoes I have known, many a time, to sell for fourpence the peck, or fourteenpence a bushel,—not more than a farthing a pound.

True, greater wages are generally obtained in London than in the country, and those who possess wealth for the most part dwell in the suburbs, where they can enjoy either town or country life at pleasure.

Many of the young women in London are complete slaves, the milliners and dress-makers especially. They do these things differently in the country; the dress-maker often goes out to work by the day, so does the tailor; neither party thinks of beginning until after breakfast, and to work

until six or seven o'clock is considered a good long day; eighteenpence a-day and their victuals, is about the average price paid to the dress-makers of this class.

The middle-classes of the English women are not over-well treated; the lower-classes lead wretched lives; the higher orders are all but goddesses. Some argue that a similar classification naturally takes place amongst the men: it may, but the lines of distinction are not so thoroughly marked. A very curious paper might be produced on this matter. I here only throw out the hint that some abler hand than mine may take it up. In the country the boundary line is not so apparent; there is scarcely a step between the habits of the homely farmer's wife and the labourer's. In London, the lodger who occupies a first-floor, would scarcely deign to speak to the "common people" who live in the attics. There is as much difference between the habits of the people who all live under one roof, as there is between the pure aristocrat and the independent and quiet citizen. He who occupies the third-floor is perhaps a mechanic; he comes home regularly at twelve to dine, gives a single knock, is admitted by his poor but clean-looking wife, wipes his feet and goes up stairs: first and second floor-doors never by any possible chance opening in the mean time. Second-floor comes with a double knock; he dines at one or two: his wife is on nodding-terms with first-floor. Sometimes they exchange a "good morning" with each other; especially if second-floor is not intimate with the "common people" up stairs. First-floor dines at three or four, if he is a clerk, or holding some situation under government; he gives a regular "ran, tan, tan," for they keep a girl, a little dirty begrimed wretch: no matter, it is "our servant." The ground-floor people (generally the landlord and family), if they chance to be at the window, bow and smile to the first-floor — he is such a respectable man — he

pays so regular — has a gallon of spirits at a time; and never such beggarly bits as a quarter-of-a-hundred of coals at once; "disgracing the appearance of the house."

Then, perhaps, there are the children of each floor; first, have platted riband behind and long tails; second, very tidy indeed; perhaps they put most of their washing out and can spare more time to look after their children; third-floor, often a dirty face, and sitting on the top-landing eating bread-and-butter, or pulling the coals out of the cupboard while the mother is washing. But this is rambling indeed, and instead of a rural sketch we are describing London manners, when we set out with an intention of saying something on Woman.

We have a saying in the country, when anything is not exactly what it ought to be, that "It's like a house without a woman in it;" or that, "Without a woman things are sure to be all at sixes and sevens;" and that, "A good woman is a great ornament to a house." Their natures are somehow more gentle than ours, even if we trace them upwards from childhood.

The fair-haired girl is content with her little doll; she smooths its pillow in its tiny cradle with all a mother's care; while the boy is a-field, robbing the poor bird of its young. He brings them home, and perhaps for a day their chirping may arrest his attention; he then grows weary, and the fair girl becomes their nurse. She takes them up stairs, has them placed by her little cot, and in the night she arises to feed them. If one dies, she sheds tears for its loss—she puts it in her bosom, deeming that so innocent a nest will restore it to life; nay, she digs it a grave, and plants flowers over it, and great is her grief when she finds that her brother has disinterred it for the cat.

The youth is at the door, waging war among the poultry with his bow and arrow, or with his wooden sword enacting

the part of Napoleon among his playmates; while the little sister is watering her flowers, or sitting at her mother's feet, with tearful eyes, listening to the tale of the "Babes in the Wood," or some such pathetic ballad. She is busied in laying down crumbs for the poor robin to eat; while he, at a little distance, is preparing his brick trap to catch the unsuspecting warbler. When it rains, he amuses himself by destroying the flies that hum on the window-pane; while she watches the silver drops, and thinks of the tears that fall from angels' eyes. So in childhood are the seeds of tender emotion sown, that come to full growth in the breast of the woman—the tender plants of pity, and love, hope, and sorrow, and fear — flowers that spring up in a future day, and make her still the beloved Eden.

She leaves her home and her friends, and becomes a wife; the scenes that are imprinted upon her memory are forsaken, and she puts all her trust and hope of future happiness upon man. She sheds a few natural tears when crossing the threshold, but gentle in her nature as a lamb, she doubts not but that he, with whose fate she is about to link her own, will ever treat her as he has done hitherto. She recks not then that he whose voice is soft and penetrating, sinking into the very gentleness of her heart, will ere long leave her for the noisy chase, the tavern-dinner, and the midnight revel. What hours will she sit alone without a murmur, looking love into the face of her first-born! But see, her eyes brighten with joy—he has come! No! he enters not; there is a confused noise in the passage, a mixture of many voices: they have borne him drunk to bed. The bottle has a greater charm for him than the prattle of his child or the angelic features of his wife; but even all this she can pardon, and her smile breaks upon him as brightly next morning as if he had done no wrong.

Oh woman! thou art lovely in thy sorrow, and often for

the sake of peace dost force thy pale lips to smile when happiness is far from thee. Man, alas! is the darkening cloud that too often dims the sun of thy beauty. The clear serenity of the morning of thy youth would expand to a full unclouded day, and sink down into a twilight of repose, amid the rosy hues of thine own brightness, were it not for man, who too often mocks thee with his false promises, and turns to storm the close of that day which came in heralded by peace and love.

Why drag such lovely flowers from the tender stem, and wear their fragrant beauty for an hour in proud triumph, then dash them heartlessly aside to wither for ever? How much has woman suffered through trusting to the love of man! how many young hearts have been broken! and hopes innumerable eternally blighted! what aching heads and throbbing brows and tearful eyes are left on lonely pillows, to weep away their sweet lives in torture, then rest unremembered in the grave!

Happy indeed are they

> "Who never told their love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on their damask cheek;"

who have pined in thought, still living upon a dreamy hope, and never awakening to the frightful realities of disappointment and despair; who have reared a standard for the perfection of man in their own imagination, and never lived to see him measured by it; who have fancied that his heart is all love like their own, and never endured his chilling neglect.—But enough of the dark, let us turn to the brighter side of the picture.

> "Auld Nature swears, the lovely dears
> Her noblest work she classes, O!
> Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
> And then she made the lasses, O!"

So sung the bard of Caledon, and never did poet love woman better than he. Man, according to his showing, was but a rude attempt, a kind of fancy-fashioning, by the Divine hand; a something incomplete, a rough design, the grey granite of the quarry; but woman, gentle woman! was the achievement of a master-hand, the production of an inspired moment, formed doubtless by the Omnipotent, just as his all-seeing eye had been pleased with the passing form of some silver-voiced seraph who swept by the golden glory with streaming wings. The graceful figure vanished over the flowery valleys of Zion: its shadow was just seen mirrored for a moment in the celestial river, soft as a summer-cloud — a dreaming, floating beauty, that left its delicate outline upon the Creator's mind, and, filled with the real and ideal loveliness it had inspired, God created woman!

Many and beautiful are the allusions to be found in the Eastern writers on woman; they far exceed all that our poets have done, excepting Burns and Shakspeare: the descriptions are so ethereal, so sunny, so unsubstantial and woman-like! One of them, and he the very least of the Oriental writers, exclaims — "Who would care to die, to be pillowed upon the silver couches of clouds in the purple-aired Paradise, while the dark-eyed daughters of the garden of Eden bent over him! beauties, with eyes soft as the gazelle's, to watch his slumber and awake him with the bubbling honey of their voices — beings whose long lashes arch like the stem of a wild blossom when it stoops to kiss the river. Oh! let me die and be carried to the pearly abodes of the Peri's! When I am wearied, let them lull me to slumber by their murmuring kisses! Let me dance with them over beds of undying flowers, to the singing of celestial birds, in a land where the trees wave in music so soft, that the sound seems distilled, and

only the sweetest is borne along the fragrant air; not harsher than the silver notes of the low-voiced Seraphim! Or let me live among them on some flowery island, in a far-off ocean, in a land where there is no night — nothing but the waving of roses, and the sound of sweet bells, and the low murmuring of the ocean, and the flapping of white-birds' wings, and their own soft words dropping with gentle cadence, at intervals just heard above the stirring flowers! Oh! I would nestle in the midst of them like a bird: they should sit in a circle and form my nest! I would take my food from their lips, for when they had nothing more to give me, I could still feed upon their velvet kisses. I would listen, and hear how love moved in the heart. I would have no sighing—nothing but a dreamy exchange of looks, a downcast heaviness, the laziness of love—the slow, deep current of indolent delight—the luxury of kisses, that would fall asleep upon the lips they were pressing!" Surely this is worthy of a true Mussulman, one who did in verity belong to the *Faithful*.

Bitter indeed was the mood of the bard's mind, when he said that Frailty was the name of Woman. Alas! man is the *ignis fatuus* that leads her astray; it is that very confidence which her unsuspecting nature puts faith in, that leads her into error—the yielding plaster of her heart, that is so easily modelled, admired for a time, and then dashed into atoms! Woman is the innocent bird, man the charmer serpent. Fascinated and blinded, she leaps unsuspectingly into destruction. Though light appear the ripples that dance upon the surface of her nature, yet the depths of her heart are a mine of love—a deep river-bed, which man but rarely fathoms; an under current, rolling deeply and strongly over the golden sands, that wash not away.

Oh woman! thou art too often sadly wronged! we magnify thy faults, we look upon the northern side of the

beautiful tree—we forget the nipping winds that may there have thinned its verdure—and turn away without examining the full bloom of its summer greenery, the pleasant foliage that, through darkness and solitude, has budded and burst forth, and even cast down its cooling shadow, when there was no one to sit under it. When shall we lie and listen through the long night without a murmur, hearkening for the well-known footstep, and feel the heart bound with delight when we catch the sound, thankful that it has come at last, and, forgetful of the weary anticipation, cling to the lip with maddened joy, when, but an hour ago, perchance it had been pressed by the——Fah! Man, thou art a devil! "Frailty, thy name is Man!" The very rocks and quicksands, and unexplored islands, and creeks and bays, have a charm for thee, and thou sailest boldly among them in quest of change, throwing thyself in the path of temptation, or, when it is concealed, steering onward in quest of it. Not so with woman; she is the lighter bark, gliding steadily along the broad sea of life, bearing up amidst adverse winds, and even stretching her white sails of hope when the helm is deserted and the chart lost, making for home without a guide, and only falling a prey to the ruthless pirate, after she has drifted for leagues upon a desolate and unknown sea.

Dear woman! we cling to thee in prosperity, for thou art a pleasant companion; we fly to thee in poverty, for there are riches in the wealth of thy kindness; in sorrow we seek thee, for thy bosom is the home of pity; and in sickness, for thou wilt attend us without a murmur. Thy presence has often made light in the deep dungeon, and without thee a pavilion is dreary. Happy is thy slave, for the chains clank not which those wear who serve thee. We would abide thine anger sooner than the smiles of man; for the sunshine of thy heart, when it relents, makes even

the remembrance of darkness sweet. Let us not, however, so far forget ourselves as to make these fair and frail creatures more than perfect; but, as a change to the picture, we will narrate what befell an old acquaintance of ours the other day, and that too in his own words.

"I have often remarked," said he, "what beautiful forms occasionally pass us in the streets, faces that haunt our thoughts for days, but are never seen again, shooting by us in their brightness, sudden as a fallen star; we just catch a glance of its trailing light — a long waving ringlet, and it darts into some door-way ushered in by hard knocks, or vanishes into the dark portals of a carriage. What conjectures we sometimes form as we walk behind a graceful woman, who moves on in all the majesty of a Juno, or sweeps the pavement like a Nymph, gliding along with noiseless footsteps, as if pacing the clouds! Then to see one apparently lost in the streets, yet too modest to inquire her way, shunning the gaze of passengers with averted head, yet seeming anxious to find some honest face to which she dare risk inquiry. Such a one," added he with a sigh, "I passed the other day in the street; there was something foreign in her features; her beautiful face was tinged with the sunny hues of Italy: it brought up images 'of the land of the rose and the myrtle,' of gondolas and guitars; such forms as Praxiteles has rendered immortal; her ringlets reminded you of the vineyard, of tendrils waving in the 'sweet south;' there was music and song in her motion. Her eyes too were 'dark with excessive bright,' and her long hair fell in luxuriant curls down her graceful neck; there was also a peculiar lightness in her step, an elasticity like the springing of a wild deer, conjuring up dances that you have dreamed of in marble halls, among perfumed lamps and open lattices.

'The mind, the music breathing from her face;
And, oh! that eye, was in itself a soul!'

But there was something apparently abstracted in her look; for a moment her eyes swept the long range of carriages, as though she had missed her own. Several young gallants also dared to upraise sundry glasses to their eyes, like astronomers who have discovered some new wonder in the heaven; but she frowned not at their insolence. No; her face would have stood the scrutiny of kings and princes, and she would only have smiled, as she did then, upon their insulting curiosity. For a moment she stood near the edge of the pavement, and looked down the street, but no carriage appeared to take her up; still she was not offended, but placed a white kid-covered finger on her thin lips. She seemed like "Patience on a monument smiling" to herself, or like Ellen Tree in the *Jewess*, just wakening to a consciousness of Ruben's presence. At length she walked down the street with a rapid step, until on a sudden her ears were arrested by the sound of a guitar, and a young Italian singing: how her eyes brightened at the sight! perchance that sound reminded her of her lovely home by the Lake of Como; — she seemed entranced, and but for the beating of time to the music by her small feet, you might have taken her for a statue.

'With head up-raised, and look intent,
And eye and ear attentive bent,
And locks flung back, and lips apart,
Like monument of Grecian art.'

She soon attracted more attention than the musician, and one youth so far forgot himself as to point to her foot; but she gave the poor singer something wrapped up in paper. It could not be less than a crown, no—a penny forsooth!—

fingers like hers were formed only to touch gold and silver —not vile copper, which but a moment before the street-sweeper might have converted into a bun at the confectioner's which she had entered. True, there might be something not quite in unison with the *bon ton* in her beating time to the music; but then I thought of the airs of her beloved Italy, how beauty and enthusiasm are blended in the bosoms of those born under sunny skies, and such thoughts increased my interest for the lovely stranger, although others had smiled at this negligence. These and a thousand other such like ideas," continued he, " passed through my mind; but mark what they led to. Oh! fool that I was. But to proceed.

" She moved along in all her natural gracefulness, occasionally exchanging a smile with moustachoed-nonpareils; but these I thought were earls or marquesses, whom she had met at Almack's, or the Opera, or the Levee; for one so nobly formed would not deign to arch the ivory of her neck to anything beneath these. I followed her footsteps, determined that if any insult was offered to one so lovely, I would resent it; thinking she might be a princess, a foreigner, and while dreaming of her native land, had forgotten the precise spot where she left her carriage, for she still continued to glance upon those that thundered past. At length her sandal became unloosed, and proved an impediment to her walking. I looked around, but no footman appeared; her pace became slower; she kept nearer to the shop-windows, but never offered to enter; and the long satin riband, ' like a wounded snake, drew its slow length along.' I felt in torture, for many an eye was drawn downward to view her disaster, but not one was gallant enough to kneel and remove it. She paused by the corner of a palisade. She looked at her foot, then around; there were but few passing; and, like Ralegh of old, when he threw down

his rich cloak at the feet of his maiden Queen, so I rushed forward, and planting one knee upon the pavement, with all the grace I possessed, I looked into her face and said, 'Allow me, fair lady.' She made no answer, but smiled, and extending her fairy foot, I soon twined the envious string round her small ankle. Another smile, and she was gone. I still remained kneeling, and caught a glance at her feet in the distance. I could have sworn to them among a thousand. She had exchanged a nod with a red-faced old gentleman, who had witnessed my gallantry, and looked on me as I knelt with a very peculiar expression. I rose and watched his glance narrowly; it came from the corner of his eye; there was a mixture of roguish knowingness in it, a kind of secret triumph, and just as he passed me with averted head, and the same queer look, his eye caught a glance at certain particles of dirt imprinted on my knee; and the ruddy old wretch gave a loud ha! ha! ha! which was re-echoed by a host of 'jarvies' from the coach-stand. But England is proverbial for its rudeness; had I done such a thing in the gardens of Paris, I should have been rewarded with glances from a hundred bright eyes. I minded not their laughter; I bore the badge of servitude upon my knee as proudly as Sir Walter bore the print of the queenly footstep upon his cloak. I would not have rubbed it off for a kingdom. Then her eyes — the associations of Italy—her dignity—the missing of her liveried servants—the emblazonry of her carriage—her enthusiasm at sight of the poor minstrel with his guitar! I walked along in the halo of a sonnet, illuminated by her beauty; for I had knelt at her feet, where princes might feel honoured in being allowed to prostrate themselves. I walked along; she again passed me; I felt ashamed—the colour mounted my forehead—she turned as if to speak; there was a divinity in her counte-

ance. I held down my head—I dared not look on her. She paused—I felt dizzy; perhaps she intended to acquaint me with the loss of her carriage; wished me to escort her home; to take her arm; to walk by her side—to hear her speak. Regent-street seemed to reel. I came in contact with a porter—his burden hit my head; it awoke me to a consciousness of my situation. I ventured to look after her; she was several yards from me. I saw her feet; they had resumed their former elasticity; no sandal was unbound; oh, that she had dropped a pin, her glove, her parasol, her boa, anything to have left me another chance to have accosted her! Alas! she went on—she turned to look at me again. Generous Italian! enthusiastic princess! I had done her a slight service; she came from a sunny land, not from the frigid North; she could not forget it. She was 'a beauty and a mystery,' and I followed her without knowing why. Poetry, or romance, or madness, had spell-bound me. She seemed alone, though in London.

"At length the sky grew black, and a few big drops fell upon the pavement. I watched her narrowly; she put up her beautiful parasol; its rich greenness added to her loveliness; she seemed like a rose under an arbour of woodbine. She paused—lifted up her eyes to the sky. The rain increased—she looked in vain for her carriage. She now stood at the corner of a street, a hackney-coachman caught her eye, and alighted from his box. I was not near enough to hear their conversation, and they entered—

"There are places called 'gin palaces'—temples dedicated to juniper—this was one of them!

"The villain doubtless had informed her that it was some hotel, and persuaded her to wait there until he got his coach in readiness; and she, a beautiful foreigner, knew but little of English manners, perhaps could not speak the language

perfectly ; she might be imposed upon, be driven to a wrong place. No, I would not allow it, and entered the gin-shop just in time to — to see the beautiful foreigner—oh, heaven ! —raising to her lips—just lifting—to those lips her own share of a quartern ' at three outs.' "*

* A knowing friend of ours, who has been blessed with three wives, chanced to read that portion of the paper which is dedicated to the praise of woman ; and on our asking his opinion as to what he thought of its truth, he placed the end of his thumb upon the tip of his nose, and, spreading out his four fingers, remained silent.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,
And star-light wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead:
I called on poisonous names, with which our youth is fed.
I was not heard: I saw them not.

SHELLEY.

WHILE in search of historical facts for my last work, I was forcibly struck with the various omens, spells, and superstitions which existed among the Anglo-Saxons, and which are still prevalent in the present day in many of our English villages. I doubt not but that those feelings are cherished by the existence of so many splendid relics of the

old time: that our venerable cathedrals, hoary castles, and imposing manor-houses, do much towards keeping alive these ancient superstitions. The peasant passes much of his time in solitude, has to range the silent fields in the dark at different seasons of the year, pass woods and places where murder has been done, and cross-roads where some suicide is interred. I remember well when a boy having to pass the gibbet-post at Saxilby one stormy night, when the wild broken sky, with its masses of gloomy and billowy clouds, through which the watery moon now and then gleamed, together with the roaring of the trees, the hooting of an owl, and the whistling and creaking of the gibbet-irons as they rattled to and fro in the blast, caused me to look sharply around, and hurry on the rusty old pony, lest Tom Otter should spring from the thicket, with the murderous hedge-stake in his hand.

In a former work, I have mentioned many of the superstitions which yet prevail in the north of England, and the following anecdote, whether new or old I know not, will serve to show how a countryman once outwitted the "Cunning Man," who was one of those so admirably hit off in that old work entitled "More Knaves Yet," etc. and in which the "Wise Man" is thus described—

> "Wise Gosling did but hear the scritch-owl cry,
> And told his wife, and straight a pig did die.
> Another time (after that scurvy owl)
> When Ball his dog, at twelve o'clock did howl,
> He jogged his wife, and, 'ill luck, Madge,' did say,
> And fox by morning stole a goose away.
> Beside he knows foul weather, rain, or hail,
> E'en by the wagging of his dun cow's tail.
> When any thieves his hens and ducks pursue,
> He knows it by the candle burning blue.
> Or if a raven cry, just o'er his head,
> Some maiden's virtue in the town is fled.

For loss of cattle, and for fugitives,
He 'll find out with a sieve and rusty knives :
His good days are when *chaffing* is well sold,
And bad days when his wife doth brawl and scold."

Such was our Wise-man of Corringham, who professed to recover stolen goods, charm away the ague, and cure those who were bewitched—to whom a simple countryman went to inquire after his lost cow. Hodge, however, reached the Wise-man's house before he had arisen, and planting himself upon the door-step, patiently awaited the appearance of the conjuror. Mean time two boys were pelting each other near the magician's abode, and one of them chanced to hurl a stone through the window, which sound speedily awakened the inmate, who came half dressed to the door, exclaiming, "What scoundrel has broken my window?"

"Ya be a cunning man," answered the countryman, "and axe me that? if ya canna tell who broke yare window, ya canna tell who stole my cow;" and the old man went home quite satisfied that if he had lost his milcher, he had however saved five shillings.

The Saxons had their unlucky days, so have many of our old country people; they sowed and reaped, planted and pruned, when the moon was in a certain quarter, or on some particular Saint's day; so does many a rude father in the hamlets still gather his fruit and regulate his husbandry according to the full or fall of the moon. The Saxons believed in the flight and number of birds; so have we still our croaking ravens denoting death; magpies, according to their number, signifying sorrow, luck, a wedding, or death; nor could I, when riding through the country last spring, and a solitary magpie went hopping across my path, for almost an hour divest my mind of the old superstitious rhythm; and when I found a corpse in my brother's house, the remembrance of that ill-omened bird again came over me, and I

wished that more than one had crossed my path. I mention this—not that for a moment I place any faith in these omens, but to show how a superstition, which was believed by our fathers and mothers, simply through having often heard them mention it, will cling to us, although we smile at our own weakness.

Although my object in this volume is to write a light sketchy work, rather than attempt a history of country life; and the chief aim of the present sketch is to narrate a well-known adventure, yet must I, before commencing it, state a few things which have fallen under my own observation, or that I have had from good authority, and will illustrate some of the ancient superstitions which have in all probability descended from the Saxons. First, I shall name the plan of curing cattle which was adopted by an old farrier in the Cliffs of Lincolnshire; his forefathers had been farriers before him in the same village for nearly three centuries, and he himself died at the age of ninety-seven. Many of these strange cures I had from an old man who was his bosom friend, and who well remembers the time when it was customary to place the head of any beast that had died of the plague on the top of a long pole, that those riding by might know there was sickness among the cattle in that neighbourhood. I forget the name of the disorder with which a cow was afflicted, but the plan for its cure was to bring her blindfolded to the edge of a pond, in which a drake was swimming, then suddenly give her sight, and the appearance of the pond and drake were to effect the cure. Nor would he give his own cattle any cooling drink, or let them blood, at the change of the moon, or in the signs of Capricorn or Aquarius. Tar was a favourite slave with the old man, and any excrescence or wart he generally removed with a red hot iron; and if a lamb died, he would flay it, and placing the skin on another lamb's back, bring the stranger to a fresh dam.

He always looked upon a foal brought forth under the planet Saturn as good as dead — or that, at farthest, it could only live as many months as the moon was days old. If a beast had over-fed itself on long rank grass, and thereby became filled with wind, he has been known to take a knife and make an incision two inches deep to let out the wind, averring that if a lighted candle was placed over the incision the current of air would rush forth with such force as to *blow the candle out.* If the lungs of cattle were infected he would pierce their ears with a bodkin, and fill the holes with the burnt roots of hazel; a quart of warm ale, with cassia, myrrh, and frankincense, was his usual prescription, when a cow caught a severe cold. I copy the following from an old pocket-book, written with the farrier's own hand.

"TO CURE CALVES THAT HAVE Y^e^ WORMES.

"Take of lupin-pease, half raw, one good fair handful; let them be bruised and cut up into divers small pieces; make the calves swallow them every morning, and it will *soon kill them! ! !*" Whether the calves or the worms are to be killed, the prescription sayeth not.

Another.

"TO CURE A SHEEP OVERBLOWN WITH FEEDING.

"Take a good cord and bind his legs; when you have laid him gently on his back, then kick him thrice in y^e^ guts; then pat him with your hand, and let him go, *and he will do very well.*"

If he was sent for suddenly to attend a horse, he always left word with his wife to have the pitch and rosin made hot, in case it might be wanted.

"TO CURE HOGS OF THE DISEASE CALLED THE MILT."

The remedy is "to make the troughs out of which they feed of beamwood: the eating out of this wood will cure the disease."

Tusser also, in his "Hundred good points of Husbandrie," recommendeth the gathering of fruit at the wane of the moon, and also the sowing of beans after St. Edmund's day, for "thereon hangeth a thing"—what that may be he sayeth not.

As I have before stated, I have seen charms worn for the ague; horse-shoes nailed on the threshold to keep out the witch; rowen-tree to ward off all spells; and part of a coffin carried in the pocket to keep off the cramp; and have frequently heard of people flocking to an execution to touch the hand of the man that was hung, as a cure for the evil. I once saw a woman draw her little naked child three times through a black-currant bush, to make it grow, she believing that it was bewitched. Watching on St. Mark's eve is still believed in by hundreds; and although few have the courage to attempt it, yet they fully credit that the spirits of those who are doomed to die that year, pass into the church.

But I heard an account, while in the country last spring, of three desperate characters, who not only defied all superstition, but even sported with the dead, and, horrible as the act may seem, yet I know it to be a fact. Whether it was for a wager or not, I forget; but they sallied out of a public-house one evening very late, after they had been playing at cards, and going into the church-yard they disinterred one of their old companions, who had not long before died, and who in his life time was a celebrated card-player. They bore the corse into the church, placed it in a seat by the communion-table, around which they were seated, and after having dealt the cards, placed the usual number in the cold

hands of the dead, and by the light of a candle played the game of all-fours. The subject is too horrible to enter into, but I have heard it from the lips of four individuals whose veracity I could not for a moment doubt. The affair created a great sensation at the time it took place; one or two of the actors in it are, I believe, yet alive, and to this hour are shunned as monsters by many of the inhabitants. I have heard that they are never even admitted into any public-house in the neighbourhood.

There is something more awful in the contemplation of death than in actually being in the presence of the dead. Death of itself is not so awful; you may sit beside one who is dead, take hold of the cold hand, press the marble-cold brow, and feel no degree of terror; it is the dim hereafter that moves through the mind in solemn mystery; fearful doubts and wild surmises, darkness and sunshine, heaven or hell, with all those awful attributes with which the poets have made gloomy the one and glorious the other; and that uncertain position we have yet to hold hereafter. I remember once hearing the sound of a passing-bell while walking in a thick wood at dark-hour; there was nothing around me but grey and hoary trees, bearing all kinds of odd and fantastic forms in the expiring light; while that deep and solemn bell boomed over the dark dells, drowning for a moment the sound of a sylvan brook, that at intervals went plashing and gibbering along, husky as the voice of the dying. I turned my thoughts to the time when death-bells were first in use, and rung, as the venerable Bede says, far and wide, "that all who heard the sound might kneel down and offer up a prayer for the soul of the departed." I fancied our simple forefathers, some busied in tilling the earth or gathering in harvest, or each following his employment. The death-bell sounded and all labour suddenly ceased; the smith paused with the uplifted hammer in his hand,

listened for a moment, then knelt beside the forge, and offered up his prayer. The woodman laid down his axe and prostrated himself at the foot of the half-felled tree; the delicate limbs of beauty were bowed in hall or bower, while the silken tissues of their drapery fell around them like a flower-bell upturned. Layman and priest, vassal and lord, obeyed the hollow summons, and knelt side-by-side, forgetting all rank, all distinction in the thoughts of death.

I well recollect perusing a very old black-lettered copy of Chaucer. It was considered a gem, probably one of the first editions printed by Caxton; there was no stop from beginning to end. The tales were marked separately by a large red letter, which alone served to break the eternal monotony of the heavy black lines; there was no other mark whereby to distinguish one story from another. It was a dull day, and the antique character in which the book was printed rendered the reading heavy. I was turning over the leaves, and discovered upon the margin of one page a few letters which had been written with ink; but then they were so pale and yellow through age as scarcely to be legible; the characters bore a close resemblance to those printed, they were written in a fine hand, and would, when fresh, have appeared clear and delicate. With some difficulty I deciphered them and they read thus:—

"The belle tolles! Thynke offe me whanne qhuat I ham deede.—Mary Tyvertone, aged 20, 1490."

And who was Mary Tiverton? doubtless some gay, beautiful, light-hearted girl, who had been perusing these poems soon after publication, had laughed at the merry pilgrims until her dark tresses flew loose from the "hooding wimple," partaking of her wild glee,—her eyes, perchance, had fallen upon the dusky wainscot, dimly lighted by the narrow window, when in the height of her merriment a

death-bell sounded from the neighbouring monastery. My fancy pictured her closing the volume, and placing it upon the high-backed oaken chair, by which she knelt to offer up a prayer for the soul of the departed, according to the injunctions of her confessor. I saw her arise, and her eye wandered for a moment upon the gaudy tapestry, where its foldings partially revealed horse and hound, and huntsman. Her beautiful face became saddened by thought, for the heavy bell still sounded; then Chaucer's poems again rested upon her knee, and she took up a curious pen, wrapped about with silk and golden wire, and dipped it into an ancient inkstand, which represented a wild boar's head grinning hideously, and then she wrote upon the margin of her new book:—

"The bell tolls! think of me when that I am dead.—Mary Tiverton, aged 20, 1490."

But to proceed. As I was comfortably seated one evening in autumn in the Plough tap-room, among several of the homely villagers, our conversation chanced to turn upon the Old Hall, an ancient desolate building which stood near a neighbouring wood, and had long been an object of terror to the peasants, through the rumours so much in circulation of noises heard there in the night, and sighs appalling which no tongue could describe. The night was stormy and dark, and the wind howled and roared down the wide chimney, while the old swing-sign creaked and whistled in the blast, making it upon the whole as solemn and fearful a time as any one who loves to be miserable could covet.

"I don't believe in ghosts," said one of our party, drawing nearer to his companion as he spoke, for just then a gust of wind drove the smoke into the apartment; "I don't believe in them, just for this reason: first, because when we are dead, if we go to heaven, we shall never want to

come here again to toil and moil; and if we happen to go to the other place, why they 'll never let us come back, whether we want or not; so for these reasons I don't believe in ghosts."

"Well," said another, whose eyes were on the full stretch, and whose face caught the broad deep glare of the ruddy fire, "well, believe what you like, but when my brother Mark died, thoff he was aboon a hundred miles off and we didn't know he was ailing, yet just at the very time as the letter said he died, we heard three loud knocks on our oak chest. Bill and I were sitting down stairs, and I says to him, 'Bill,' says I, 'as sure as a gun that 's a sign of death;' and sure enough it was, so I believe in ghosts."

"I am sure old Bartley appeared again after he was dead," said another; "for, if you remember, them Methody folks used to sit up and sing and pray all night, and one time, as Clasher Cawdell was taking his horses down Humble-car Lane, about twelve o'clock at midnight, he saw old Bartley standing against his own door, wearing the very same red waistcoat that he had on when alive, and he said, 'Good night, Mr. Bartley,' for he didn't know he was dead; and the people who were inside rushed out and asked Clasher whom he was talking to, and he said he was only wishing Mr. Bartley good night, and before he had well got the words out of his mouth he vanished, red waistcoat and all. I believe it to be as true as true can be."

"Well, I do believe in the Devil," said the first speaker, "for he appeared to old Joe Stow one Sunday morning in Lea wood, for getting sticks; he rattled his chains and run him as far as Benny Turner's house, and when he found he couldn't catch Joe, why he vanished in a flash of fire, among some fir trees."

"Now, that isn't at all likely," said another; "because it stands to sense, that if it be to the Devil's interest to get

folks to break the Sabbath, why he 's not such a fool as to frighten 'em away, to make 'em do better."

" Happen not," was the answer; " but you know he might have come to carry old Joe away altogether; and Joe thought so too, and says he believes old Nick would have had him—only he happened to remember the first line in the Lord's Prayer."

" If you don't believe in ghosts," said an old man who sat smoking in the corner, and who was noted for being the bravest fellow in the village in these matters when he was drunk, " why go and sleep in the Old Hall as I have done, and you 'll hear row enough there to keep you awake, I 'll warrant you."

" I've often looked through the broken windows at daytime, and saw nothing," said the one who doubted the Devil's appearance.

" Happen not," answered old Richard, " not in the daytime, because ghosts never walk 'till twelve o'clock at night, and then they always vanish away when the cock crows. But if I haven't seen 'em," added he shaking his head mysteriously, while the humour twinkling in his eye belied his gravity, " I 've heard as big noises kicked up as if a score of ghosts were playing at nine-pins."

" Well, what have you heard?" inquired half-a-dozen anxious voices.

" Why," continued the old man, tipping a sly wink to mine host, " when I slept in the Old Hall one night, I lay awake until I heard the church-clock strike twelve, and then all at once, as I lay listening, something came pat, pat, pat, up stairs;" imitating the measured footsteps as he spoke by tapping his knuckles on the table. " Well, I lay listening, and it came up as far as the chamber-door, which I had left a-jar — "

" And what did you see?" inquired another.

"Nothing," answered the old man; "only when it had stayed a few moments, it went pat, pat, down again; and if it wasn't a ghost, why it must have been a rat."

"It was a ghost sure enough," said the superstitious brother of the deceased Mark, "and if I'd been you, I should have spoken to it."

"And what should you have said?" inquired old Richard with a grin.

"I should have had a Prayer Book or else the Bible in my hand," answered the other, "and laying it on my heart, I should have said, 'In the name o'th' Lord, who are you—what do you want—where do you come frae—what is it troubles you?' I should have said so three times, then it would have been forced to answer me, else it could never have come again. I know this would have done, because I once heard my grandfather say, as his grandfather once knew a parson as did so to a ghost, and it told him where some money was buried, and when it had done all it wanted it never came again. Now I believe there 's money hidden somewhere in the Old Hall, and that this ghost can't rest till its discovered where it is."

"Is it true," inquired another, "that a young woman in white, without a head, is seen walking on Morton-bank every night at twelve a-clock?"

"Not every night," replied the host; "but I believe one walks there sometimes, especially when it's wild and stormy, and anybody in the neighbourhood 's dead. I once heard Dick King say that she chased him as far as Crow-garth, and that he had to run as hard as ever his shammocks could go to get out of her way. About a hundred years ago, they say a sailor murdered his sweetheart there and then cut off her head, and after that drowned her in the Trent, and that her spirit has been seen there at different times ever since."

"Well, I 've never seen aught worse than myself," said the first speaker, "and I 've been under Tom Otter's gibbet-post at Drinsey-nook, when Saxilby church-clock's been striking twelve; so that I think if there is aught to be seen in the way of ghosts, the place where a fellow committed murder, and where he himself hangs, would be a likely spot enough."

"I have heard say that he used to shout after folks to take him down, when first he was gibbeted," said an eager listener; "and that he had life in him after he had hung there three years."

"Stuff-a-nonsense," answered the other; "it was only the wind whistling through his gibbet-irons that made a bit of a rattling, or else the dark fir-tees that made a roaring noise over Saxilby Moor.* As to his having life in him after three years, I have heard that a bird built its nest in his mouth, so I suppose that 's what they meant; but whether it be true or not, I can't say: however, to settle all disputes about ghosts, I 'll make one to sit up all night in the Old Hall, if anybody beside dare join me?"

To this three others gave a ready assent, in spite of old Richard's endeavouring to dissuade them, and the next evening we set out on our "perilous expedition."

Autumn had already far advanced, and the sweet greenery of summer was fast changing into the gaudy tints of death, dying like the dolphin in rainbow-hues. Here and there the fallen leaves were careering over the desolate valleys, and all Nature wore her most solemn aspect; even the Old Hall, as we approached it, seemed to partake of the melancholy of nature, and sadly harmonised with the landscape. Never had I seen a finer abode for a ghost; it had such a ruinous appearance, so much to do with the past, and so little with the present, as one of our party said,

* See note at the end of this sketch.

"It looked like a dying house." You felt as if man had no business there, or wondered if ever the sunbeams beat on a spot so dreary and silent. A clump of tall old elms towered up in the distance; these had once contained a considerable rookery, but the dusky inhabitants had long since fled: you saw the deep blue sky through the rents of the decaying nests; only one large old rook stood swinging himself upon a solitary branch and uttering his mournful caw amid the desolation. Here and there a large old oak poked out its gnarled and hoary arm from the wood, and grated along the ridge of a moss-covered wall, which ran along behind the building. The old house was one of that description so well calculated to call up recollections of scenes of yore: its old oaken doors, heavily studded with iron, and bearing marks of former battering, told that there had been a day when "banners hung on high and battles passed below:" its deep stone window frames were shorn of their gaudy glass, and the free wind passed in and out as it listed. One pillar of the massy porch had slipped, and the whole of it now hung awry, while the huge slab which seemed to slumber before it, was covered with yellow lichens, telling that long years had passed away since the foot of man had echoed there. We entered the venerable mansion, and saw the walls which had once been wainscoted, now nearly naked; or where here and there an old oaken panel was loosely hung, it had become a plaything for the wind. In the kitchen, or servants' hall, was an ancient oaken table, with its sturdy urn-like legs; while two high-backed chairs, such as an antiquary loves to gaze upon, stood like sentries at either end of this formidable piece of furniture, all seeming to look with regret upon the wide rusted grate, which in olden times had done so much towards preparing the feast. A wide balustraded staircase led us to the upper rooms; in one of these

stood an old-fashioned high testered bed, with its curious curtains, on which some long-forgotten hand had enwrought Jacob's dream, where troops of red-winged angels were climbing a blue ladder, which led to a heaven of deep yellow. I thought the bed bore signs of recent disturbance, but made no remark thereon, nor did we pause to open a door at the end of the room, as we were anxious to kindle a fire in the wide grate, and seat ourselves in comfort for the evening in the hall or kitchen.

As the darkness was now advancing, and we had examined the most striking part of this old mansion, and collected fuel enough to burn throughout the night, we sat down before the cheerful fire, filled our pipes, and uncorked a bottle of Burton ale, while one of our friends sung the following quaint old song, which no doubt had often been trolled forth before in that very room, at merry Christmas-tide, or the happy harvest supper, and which will live longer than any homily old Bishop Still ever composed, and carry his name through centuries. It was first printed in 1575, and is entitled, "Jolly Good Ale;" and thus runs the burthen:—

"I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good;
But sure I think, that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothing a-cold;
I stuff my skin so full within,
Of jolly good ale and old.
Back and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand, go cold:
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

I love no roast but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire,
A little bread shall do me stead,
Much bread I don't desire;

Nor frost nor snow, nor wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I wold [would],
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.
Back and side, go bare, &c.

And Tib my wife, that as her life,
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she, till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek ;
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl,
Even as a malt-worm should ;
And saith, sweet heart, I took my part
Of this jolly good ale and old.
Back and side, go bare, &c.

Now let them drink, till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do,
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring men to :
And all poor souls that have scoured bowls
Or have them lustly trolde,
God save the lives of them and their wives,
Whether they be young or old.
Back and side, go bare, &c.

The song ceased, the glass circulated with greater speed, and we told our merriest and most doleful tales, not forgetting every story of ghosts and murder that we had before heard.

Night came on in deep autumnal blackness, one of those moonless nights, whose "nodding horror" makes darkness visible. The wind had arisen, and lifting up its deep voice, roared loudly as it swept over the gloomy wood, which groaned again beneath the rumbling blast, that rang through the grated windows beneath our feet as if a host of demons bestrode the gale. The loosened wainscot also flapped upon the mouldering walls ; and the owls, which had been disturbed from their ancient abode by the fire we had kindled, were flying abroad hooting to each other, as if they were inquir-

ing the cause of molestation. Alone, the uproar would have been awful; but as it was, we were bent upon being merry, and tried to outsing the wind, and vie in our tumult within doors the loud outcry abroad. At length we heard something fall upon the floor overhead, which caused us to spring suddenly from our seats, and look at each other, to see who should first volunteer to investigate the cause of this alarm. After a long parley, it was decided that we should all go together, and as the staircase was very wide, we went four abreast. Nothing, however, had occurred, beyond the falling of a panel, and while replacing it, we were suddenly startled by a deep howl from below: we listened and distinctly heard the tread of soft footsteps, moving rapidly along the floor. It was no dream,—the pat, pat, pat, that old Richard had described, was distinctly heard, and we wished that the old man was with us. While we thus stood upon the landing, looking blankly into each other's faces, or glancing down the staircase—which was entirely dark saving the faint gleam which our lamp cast, or an occasional burst of light from the fire below—we saw distinctly amid the gloominess at the foot of the stairs, a pair of fierce, bright fiery eyes, fixed attentively upon us. As we gazed upon them, they seemed to blaze again with a deep steady glare, and one of our companions whispered that they had twice flashed fire; but this I attributed to himself winking through fear. What could be done? there was no escaping down the wide staircase without passing those hideous eyes; as to the form they belonged to, we could see nothing of it for the deep shadow of the hall-door which we had left a-jar: those eyes seemed only to have sprang from the darkness.

"Do you believe in ghosts now," whispered one of our bravest to the sceptic. "No," answered he; "that is none other than the devil." How long we might have stood gazing upon those glaring eye-balls I know not, had not our

fears caused us to huddle together, and that so closely, that in endeavouring to get hindmost, the feet of the unbeliever slipped, and down stairs he rolled, carrying away the lamp which he held, and which was speedily extinguished. We heard a deep growl,—then a noise as if blows were falling upon some hollow object; then came a loud laugh, which at another time would have sounded mirthfully, but amid the gloom and deep excitement under which we laboured, it rang exultingly and fiend-like, and we doubted not but that Sathanus was triumphing over his prey. Suddenly a light broke forth from the large kitchen or servants' hall, and we discovered a four-footed monster, capering and making a variety of antics; in form it resembled a dog, but in that lurid light, our imaginations gave him a shagginess and a blackness such as is only seen when the evil one is said to assume that shape. At length the form of our fallen companion appeared at the bottom of the stairs, laughing loudly, and calling upon us to descend. He had then entered into a compact with the demon, and perhaps intended sacrificing us for his own safety; no, we would not descend: again he exclaimed: "Come down, you fools; it's only my dog Boxer, that has followed us all this way, and as he found the door open, he walked in while we were up stairs."

We again seated ourselves before the fire, and laughed heartily at the termination of our adventure; while the sceptic tried hard to convince us that he ventured down stairs of his own accord, and knew from the first that it was no ghost. He accounted for his novel mode of descending, through his anxiety to make the discovery, averring that, from the first, he knew it was only his own dog. However, in spite of all his arguments, we had our doubts on the matter.

While enjoying our tipple, smoking a cigar, or patting the dog, which was basking at full-length before the fire, our con-

versation turned upon the cause which had brought about the desolation that then reigned over the Old Hall. All known on the matter was, that the old lord, the last of his race who dwelt there, was suspected of murdering a young lady and her child, and throwing their bodies into a gloomy lake which stood in the centre of the neighbouring wood; and one of our party repeated a ballad which he had written on the subject, and thus ran the story of

THE HAUNTED LAKE.

There is a wood which few dare tread,
So gloomy are the hoary trees:
The vaulted chambers of the dead
Scarce fill the soul with half the dread
You feel while standing under these.

Deep in its centre stands a lake,
Which the o'erhanging umbrage darkens;
No roaring wind those boughs can shake,
Ruffle the water's face, or break
The silence there which ever hearkens.

No flowers around that water grow,
The birds fly over it in fear,
The antique roots above it bow,
The newt and toad crawl deep below,
The black snake also sleepeth there.

Few are the spots so deathly still,
So wrapt in deep eternal gloom:
No sound is heard of sylvan rill,
A voiceless silence seems to fill
The air around that liquid tomb.

The ivy creepeth to and fro,
Along the arching boughs which meet;
The fir and dark-leaved mistletoe
Hang o'er the holly and black-sloe,
In darknes which can ne'er retreat.

For there the sunbeams never shine,
That sullen lake beholds no sky,
No moonbeam drops its silvery line,
No star looks down with eye benign :
Even the white owl hurries by.

The huntsman passes at full speed,
The hounds howl loud and seem to fear it ;
The fox makes for the open mead,
Full in the teeth of man and steed—
He will not deign to shelter near it.

No woodman's axe is heard to sound
Within that forest night or day ;
No human footstep dents the ground,
No voice disturbs the deep profound ;
No living soul dare through it stray.

For shrieks are heard there in the night,
And wailings of a little child ;
And ghastly streams of lurid light,
Have flashed upon the traveller's sight,
When riding by that forest wild.

For there hath human blood been shed
Beside the tangling bramble's brake,
And still they say the murdered dead,
Rise nightly from their watery bed,
And wander round the Haunted Lake.

'Tis said she is a Lady fair,
In silken robes superbly dress'd,
With large bright eyes that wildly glare,
While clotted locks of long black hair
Drop o'er the infant at her breast.

She speaks not, but her white hand raises,
And to the lake with pointed finger
Beckons the step of him who gazes ;
Then shrieking seeks the leafy mazes,
Leaving a pale blue light to linger.

But who she is no one can tell,
Nor who her murderer might be,—
But one beside that wood did dwell,
On whom suspicion darkly fell:
A rich unhappy Lord was he.

In an old hall he lived alone,
No servant with him dared to stay;
For shriek and yell, and piercing groan,
And infant's cry, and woman's moan,
Rang through those chambers night and day.

He was indeed a wretched man,
And wrung his hands, and beat his breast:
His cheeks were sunken, thin and wan,
Remorse had long deep furrows run
Across his brow,—he could not rest.

He sometimes wandered round the wood,
Or stood to listen by its side;
Or bending o'er the meadow-flood,
Would try to wash away the blood,
With which his guilty hands seemed dyed.

He never spoke to living soul;
Oh, how an infant made him quake!
For then his eyes would wildly roll,
And he would shriek, and curse and growl,
As if he felt the burning lake.

Scarcely had the poet ended his ditty, when, startling as the sound of a trumpet, sudden as unexpected thunder, we heard one of the doors up stairs close with a loud bang, and a heavy foot moved slowly, or seemed rather to stagger, across the floor under which we sat. This was not fancy, for the old windows chattered again at every stride that was taken: the ghost then had come at last, and we sprang up from our seats, and gazed with astonishment at each other.

"Inspiring John Barley-corn,
What dangers dost thou make us scorn,"

for had we not drunk pretty deeply by this time, ten to one we should have adjourned by mutual consent and never ventured out again a Ghost-hunting.

"Come along," exclaimed the unbeliever in ghosts, grasping a large rusty poker, "and I'll exorcise him, even if it be the old Lord himself."

"I fear this will turn out more serious than the dog-adventure," said another, "and I for one will prefer staying behind."

"Then stay alone," exclaimed we, endeavouring to look brave and follow our leader, while our knees were ready to knock together through fear. Again we ascended the staircase; we gained the uppermost landing, and the sceptic was in the act of opening the massy chamber-door, when something fell so heavily on the floor, as caused the whole staircase to vibrate; a deep groan followed the fall, and then we heard some one within breathe heavily. This was too much: the unbeliever bounded down stairs at three leaps, and we heard his teeth chatter again with terror. We were about to follow his example, when we heard a deep husky voice exclaim, "Betty, fill this pint;" the tones were familiar to us, we rushed in with one accord, and found our friend old Richard stretched upon the floor dead drunk. The mystery needed no further explanation: we had long marvelled where he slept, and now discovered that he lived rent free at the Old Hall; and he had some interest in circulating the rumours of its being haunted. We put the old man comfortably to bed, and when we returned to the kitchen, we found our brave leader upon his knees, nor did we, until many a long day after, tell him who was the living ghost of the HAUNTED HOUSE.

Tom Otter (or Thomas Temporell) was executed at Lincoln in 1806, and his body afterwards hung in chains on Saxilby Moor, near the ancient Roman Fossdyke. He married Mary Kirkam, on Sunday

morning, November the 3rd, and murdered her on the evening of the same day, within a few yards of where his gibbet-post is at this hour standing. Last spring I caught a glimpse of the gibbet-post and irons, while passing the end of the lane ; nor could I forget the sensations which the sight of it awakened in me when a boy, when I stood gazing upon the mouldering bones and the rusted irons, or heard them whistling in the wind at night, as I passed the long line of gloomy fir-trees. I commenced a paper on the subject of the murder, intending it for the present volume ; but the whole affair had such a revolting appearance, that it was thrown aside in disgust. So hardened was the murderer, that his countenance underwent no change during the trial, nor did his firmness abate when sentence of death was passed upon him ; it was only afterwards, when the Judge decided that his body should be hung in chains, that his resolution faltered.

THE SUBSIDING OF THE WATERS.

> The morn is up again! the dewy morn,
> With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom;
> Laughing the clouds away with playful scorn,
> And living as if earth contained no tomb,
> And glowing into day.
>
> *Childe Harold.*

The ark had long stood motionless as a mountain upon the calm waters, for scarce a wave murmured along that illimitable ocean, which spread far as the cloudy shores of the sky, above the silent world. The sun streamed out high in the heaven, and darted his golden beams upon the outstretched deep; but neither tree nor turret arose to break the dazzling light; no green hill uplifted its eternal head—for even the pointed peaks of the highest summits lay far below the slumbering waves. Not a vestige of the beautiful earth was visible,—nothing, save the shadow of the ark and the floating clouds, was mirrored upon the bosom of the waters. The dolphin and the shark swam through the streets of mighty cities, and the sword-fish pursued its prey over the temples of the gods.

Seven times had the sun arisen since the waves last boiled like a cauldron, as they rushed down the only empty cavern which the world contained; since then no sound had broken the stillness of that watery solitude. At length a dove was loosened from its floating prison, and,

springing into the air, spread its white wings in the sunshine, wheeling in wonder around its own shadow beneath: then making a few circles higher up the sky, it sailed away upon the clear bosom of the wind, and searched in vain for its former home. What time the shadow of the ark fell eastward it flitted before the grated window, darkening as it passed the lovely brow of Japhet's wife, who was waiting anxiously the return of her favourite bird. At last the drenched boughs of a pine appeared in the distance, resting like a floating branch upon the waves; the drooping wings of a dead eagle waved to and fro amid the weeds that also fluttered in the breeze as they hung suspended from the dropping branches. Then rose the tops of the mountains, like tiny islands, dotting the immeasurable ocean; here and there the water rushed furiously along as it became narrowed between the defiles, bearing down masses of the precipice, that like flood-gates had retarded its progress. The ponderous whale threw the lessening waves aside, as he tried in vain to clear the pointed crags on which he rested, wounding himself deeper at every struggle. The mighty sea-snake was entangled among the trees, and reared his pillar-like crest in the sunshine, and arched the silver of his neck to reach the receding waters; but the inwoven boughs bore him aloft in triumph; and the curled leaves soon spread out to the wind and sunshine, as bright as when the nightingale last sang amid their branches. Soon the little hills bared their green heads to the sky; then the plains stretched out their expansive bosoms, and desolate cities became visible. The sea-weed "clung to the marble of their palaces;" the crown of the monarch had been washed away, and rested beside the beggar's wallet;—even the dog had raised his last yell upon the ermined robes of the Pagan priest. By the city gate lay a dead tiger—the head of a lovely child rested upon the

striped savage, its little arms encircling his shaggy neck; —a wolf rested by its side, in a cringing position, as if it had fled there for safety. Hard by, lay a beautiful maiden, — her long hair was unbound, and fell in clusters upon the grass; her white hand reclined upon a young lamb which lay dead beside her; around its neck hung a garland of flowers, but they were all withered; upon her other hand rested its mouth, as though it had died licking her taper fingers. A basket of rude workmanship stood near, which also contained a few faded flowers and a chaplet partly woven, with which she intended to have adorned her own hair. An unfinished building, of splendid architecture, stood by the side of a river, but the rich carvings of the pillars were strangely festooned with weeds; and oozing slime covered the marble staircases,— and the forms of dead fishes lay baking in the long galleries through which the sunbeams darted. Plummet and rule were buried beneath the sand, while colossal statues reared their high heads amid the ruins, like proud possessors of the pile, triumphing over those who had given them shape, and now lay prostrate at their feet.

In a large temple, set apart for the worship of the stars, hundreds had rushed for safety in the hour of danger. And now the abated waters revealed them as when they rushed headlong upon their idolatrous devotion. Beside the altar lay the priestess, grasping in her hand the symbol of office,—a silver star glittering upon the head of a serpent of carven gold. Upon the marble pavement knelt a group of beautiful maidens, attendants at the sacrifice; each wore a star on her forehead, bound by a fillet of white roses. Some of them were scattered apart by the roaring deluge. One had thrown her arms around a ponderous pillar, and had died pressing it with an agonized embrace;—another had fallen just within reach of the altar; while a third

had torn the star from her brow, and died pressing it to her chilly bosom.

Beyond a flight of broad steps, that led to the shrine of the star-god, was stretched a young woman. Her arms were uplifted in death, and she held a little infant in her grasp, as if she had died imploring her idol to protect it. Upon the bosom of a beautiful youth was pillowed the head of a lovely girl; his arms encircled her snowy neck,—her long hair fell in masses upon his shoulder, the waters had swept one lock across his lips, and they had closed pressing it. A young kid, ready bound for the sacrifice, lay upon the floor, a rusted knife had fallen beside it, while an old priest, whose long beard fell over the star upon his bosom, lay with clenched teeth at its feet. Several groups had fallen in the confusion; some, in endeavouring to regain the open door, lay in masses around the threshold, — while others were stretched at the base of the altar and around the shrine of the idol.

In another part of the city lay a group of drunkards; some yet held the wine-cups in their hands. One had died with his arm uplifted to heaven, and his hand clenched, as if he had shaken it in defiance at the Omnipotent. Others had perished holding the goblets aloft, as though they had waved them to some bacchanal chorus. One grasped the handle of a capacious vessel, as if in the act of replenishing his cup; another lay apart, with clasped hands and distended mouth, as if he had died shrieking; while a third had expired in the deep slumber of drunkenness. Here and there mingled the forms of women; some tearing their hair in agony; others kneeling upon the earth in prayer; one pressed her infant to her bosom,—another clutched the arm of her husband,—while a third had fallen upon the ground in the act of lifting the wine-cup to her lips.

The streets were silent, — where so lately had sounded the voices of merriment, all was now as mute as the grave. Not a footstep echoed through the lofty arches of that city, —not a whisper sounded along the vaulted galleries—saving the tread of Japhet and his lovely wife, as they passed through on their way to the plains of Shinar. Here they had lived before the deluge,—in those streets had Leelah left her little ones, when she was hurried reluctantly to the ark. Hand-in-hand they journeyed along by the desolate walls: they reached the door of their former home, and there lay the first-born of their love—his sunny locks floating upon the moist sand; one shriek did the fond mother raise, and fell upon the earth. Silent and dejected did Japhet bend over her: just then the gorgeous rainbow again spanned the azure arch of heaven; the weeping husband pointed to the celestial sign, and they again wandered along, shedding tears at every footstep. Painful was their journey, — they passed the lambs that knew Leelah's voice and came to her to be fed. The kine, too, which her own hands had milked in the rosy sunset, while her little ones gambolled around her, lay there. The camels that had so often borne them when they travelled, now stretched their stiff limbs upon the grass. And children, with which their little ones had played in happy hours, met their eyes at every turn. Even Lenar, the silver-voiced, she who had so often sung their little Neram to sleep, lay beside the vine-tree, hugging the innocent child to her bosom.

Leelah shed "a few natural tears" over the young barbarian that clasped her unconscious infant, for Lenar had often knelt down with them to pray,—and had bowed the dark ringlets of her hair at the name of Jehovah, and would have forsaken the idols which her father worshipped, —but now her sweet tongue was for ever hushed. No more

in the valleys of Delar would she gather the white lilies, to make a bed for her little Neram,—no more climb the steep heights of Armon to pluck the blue-belled champaks, with which she so often adorned the young kids. The deep Hullum might murmur along—its waves would never again open to receive her beautiful form. The olive trees might put forth their leaves, the grove of citrons blossom, and the sweet myrrh scatter its fragrance on the breeze, but never again would those shady places be awakened by such melodious echoes, nor the wind bear away such dulcet music on its silken wings.

Heaven looked down in pity upon the weeping wife, as she bent over her lovely handmaiden and sinless child. And if a murmur escaped her pale lips at the unalterable decrees of Omnipotence, the recording angel registered it not; for the sobbings of his own grief, at the sight of her misery, left him for a moment unguarded. And the all-seeing eye of the Eternal One flashed not then upon Justice, who slumbered at his feet, wearied with the last desolation. Cherubim and Seraphim bent pensively over the golden battlements of heaven, and sighed deeply as they looked down upon the silent world. Even the ancient Archangels leaned upon their silver trumpets and gazed upon the starry floor in deep woe. The white-winged harpers sat apart;—their heads bowed over the golden strings, but not an immortal finger struck the chords—there was a deep silence in heaven!

On they journeyed;—horse and rider lay together in the still streets; the thundering chariots were overturned; many a proud steed, that had arched its neck and tossed out its long mane to the wind, lay with distended nostril on the earth—mute and powerless as the rider. Gold and garments were strewn in the places of merchandise. The garland of laurel and silver hung upon the tall

columns of the arena, waving in the gale, as if in mockery it sought a competitor, — but the sinewy wrestlers were all overthrown,—not a champion stepped forth to contend for the prize; even the all-conquering deluge had refused to bear it away. The challenge of the gladiator fluttered unnoticed in the breeze, the contending elements only had accepted it, and left destruction to gaze on their triumph.

In a car of rude emblazonry, rich with the vermil of burning suns and blushing meteors and stars twinkling faintly in bedimmed silver, sat a heathen monarch. His arm was uplifted in stern command, and his lips apart, as if he yet shouted to his attendants. But they were not seen amongst the dead; the hoof-marks of their steeds were yet visible in the direction of the mountains, whither they had hurried in the hour of danger. The sceptre had fallen from his hand, and a slave had run forward a few paces with the rich toy. The laugh of derision rested upon his lips, as when the tempest had overtaken him. A young queen sat dead by the monarch's side; her white hands were clasped together, and her lovely face was turned heavenward, as though she had died praying.

In the deep defile that led to the mountains lay the dead in masses. Flocks, and herds, and drivers, and horsemen, and chariots, and heavily-laden vehicles, were all mingled together. Here lay one who had contended with the spotted leopard for the slippery ledge on which it had made its lair,—but both man and beast had fallen in the struggle, and lay embracing each other in death. There another was circling the hanging pine, half-way down the steep precipice where it grew, and on which he had been thrown from the height; — perhaps by his own brother. A third, with outstretched hands, still clung to a portion

of the rock which had broken in his grasp. Further on was a youth who bore a maiden in his arms. One foot was pointing forward, as if he essayed another step, but, wearied with his fair burden, they had sunk down and died unseparated.

Beyond these lay a little boy,—he still held his young sister's hand; the fond mother had fallen above them with an infant at her breast,—her face was turned to where they fell, as if she was encouraging them to proceed. The father had lingered behind; a sickly child lay in his arms, its face pressed to his bosom, as though he had tried to shelter it from the sheeted torrents. Upon an eminence rested a young woman; below it were two men; one grasped with both hands the stem of a broken bough, the other still clung to the furthermost twigs. With this rude weapon the husband had endeavoured to defend the height which he had gained with his wife, for preservation, but his adversary had caught the branch and they had perished in the struggle. A hyena had succeeded him, and seemed to look down in death upon the combatants with savage triumph.

Some had sought for shelter in a cavern by the mountain pass; among these two sisters lay, their arms thrown around each other's neck—their lips were pressed together; even the merciless waves had rolled over them in pity and left them undivided. In the centre of the cave lay a lovely girl, her little fingers were twined in the shaggy mane of a grim lion, which had stretched itself out there to die; its long tail was lashed around the child, and they only appeared as if they slept, so placid was the little seraph's countenance, and such majestic repose seemed to rest upon the desert's monarch. An old man was laid beside them; his shaggy brows were closely knit, and his leg was drawn

upward, as if to avoid the lion's mouth; but the jaws of the royal beast were closed, as though it had died without a murmur.

An affrighted silence rested upon the earth; the wind seemed to blow in whispers, as if afraid of its own voice. Nothing save the rumbling rivers were heard, and they plashed along in hollow murmurs, as though they sought for some deep cavern in which they might slumber for ever. The very clouds appeared to pause as they journeyed over the still sky, as if they mourned over the ruins of the world. The fallen grass rose reluctant from the pressure of the waters, afraid to look round upon the desolation. And the trees hung down their drooping boughs in grief, for they had no flowers to overshadow. No ring-dove cooed in the depths of the old forests; not a skylark mounted the silvery palace of the heavens; even those that were set free from the ark, hurried away without a warble, to search for the remembered daisies. Not a lamb bleated in the vales,—not an ox lowed upon the hills,—no steed shook the fields with its bounding,—no shepherd sounded his oaten reed beneath the old oak,—no milk-maid carrolled through the dales,—not an axe echoed through the deep woods. The murmur of the city was hushed, the shrill laughter of merry children had died away. The snarling trumpet chided not, the clashing symbols had ceased to sound, the dull dead drum rolled no more. The deep baying of a dog, the crowing cock, the cawing rook, nay, even the chirp of a grasshopper, would have given a life to the awful scene, but no sound arose. The whole earth was wrapt in thought, as if listening for the voices of those who slumbered upon its bosom; even the ancient hills appeared to hearken!

Oh! deem not that the earth contained nothing beautiful

before the Deluge! When shall we again gaze upon such matchless faces as those which drew down from heaven the sons of God by their loveliness. Never again shall the still starlight be broken by the gentle flapping of snowy wings, such as the meek-eyed angels expanded when they sailed down to the bosoms of the daughters of men. Never more shall immortal lips be heard disclosing to listening beauty the secrets of the gardens of Zion, or pouring in full melody upon their ears sweet snatches of those lays which are alone warbled in heaven. Beautiful were those beings who lured the young cherubim from their starry abodes! Such a race will never again appear,—no fair eyes are now uplifted to the clouds,—the eternal lovers have fled!

What would we not give for the traditions of these fallen angels,—the wonders of heaven which they revealed to their beloved ones! They alone could tell how the untrodden bowers of Paradise bloomed, after our first parents were driven from that abode of happiness. How would their silver pinions beat the fragrant air over the rich garden of Eden, as they paused, bird-like, above the tall myrtles and rich roses, such as never again blowed beyond those walls. But they are gone! even those whose daring plumes beat the same thunder-cloud as that in which the lordly eagle screamed, will appear no more. Where are the rude songs which the early daughters of the earth first chanted?—where the legends they told, when tending their flocks and herds in the unbounded plains?—all are forgotten! the roaring waters have left no vestige behind.

No, no more is the grave of Abel strewn with flowers; the old moonbeams alone can point out where he lies. The rude stones that marked the burial-place of Eve are all swept away, and the ancient oak that waved above the "narrow house" of Adam was uprooted by the whirling waves. The flaming sword was also quenched

that had blazed for a thousand years over the gates of Paradise. The deep river-courses were changed, and shaggy defiles formed through the iron bosom of the rocks. The sun, the moon, the stars, the blue sky, and the old ocean, only remained unaltered when the wide waters had subsided.*

* The Author apologises for this paper, and a portion of one or two others, which are not in exact keeping with the title of the volume; but trusts that they will not be read with less pleasure on that account.

THE OLD BULL'S HEAD.

On through the hamlet as they paced,
Before a porch, whose front was graced
With bush and flagon trimly placed,
Lord Marmion drew his rein;
The village inn seemed large, though rude,
Its cheerful fire and hearty food
Might well relieve his train.

Marmion.

Every man has his hobby; that is, something which he takes more delight in than in aught beside; mine is a love of rambling into the country, and when weary, resting myself in some road-side alehouse, and there enjoying my glass of home-brewed, and my crust of bread and cheese, at leisure. This is a vagabondizing kind of life, which a poor author may enjoy without doing himself much injury; a

slip or two of paper, a pencil, and any rural stile, or the mossy stem of some old tree, or sloping sunny bank, make an excellent study; and he can there luxuriate in the beauties of Nature, and attend to his labour at the same time. An old coat that has seen the sunshine of two or three summers, and a pair of trousers that can stand the wear and tear of bramble and gorse bush, are excellent materials for these rural peregrinations: — never mind about dressing yourself like a gentleman,—the trees and fields are no respecters of persons; and although mine host may not show you into his best parlour at the first visit, yet, after a time or two, you will find yourself on excellent terms with him. If he likes your looks, he will allow you to dine with his family; and if you are not over finely dressed, he will only charge you a shilling for your dinner, especially if he sees that you make yourself "quite at home" with him. Many of these old Bonifaces are very intelligent men; they have seen a good deal of the world — at least the living portion of it; the wounded sailor and the weary soldier have, by turns, halted there, and told their "hair-breadth 'scapes' to the wondering rustics that assembled around the huge kitchen fire. The foot-beaten traveller lifts up his eyes thankfully when he sees the old sign swinging and creaking upon the tall post, well knowing that his shilling is sure to purchase him a pleasant look, rest, and refreshment And well do I remember, when a boy, I spurned the brutal bondage of apprenticeship, and set off, friendless and unknown, into the world to seek employment, — with what pleasure I was wont to enter these rural caravanserais! and, placing my little bundle on the long settle, spread my benumbed hands over the cheerful blaze. Many an old alehouse have I reposed in, when a boy, in the counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, Durham, Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire, and many another shire, that have stood a

century or two, with their old-fashioned signs of "St. George and the Dragon," "The Old Black Bull," "The Red Lion," "The Old Blue Bell," "The Old Bull's Head," "The Royal Oak," "The Plough," "The Old King's Head," "The Shakspeare," and many another old sterling English name.

I know it is not considered gentlemanly to visit these ale-houses,—these ancient taverns,—where they sell "Ale, Wine, and Spirituous Liquors, deal in Tobacco, and have Good Accommodation for Man and Horse." But I could say a great deal on this matter, if I chose, and prove that, if it is not gentlemanly, it is almost the only chance that the man in indifferent circumstances has of enjoying a social hour or two with his neighbours. I respect the man who can pass his life every evening by his own fireside with his family, and there find all he desires of domestic comfort; nor have I a less respect for the honest tradesman, who for twenty years has been a regular visitant at the same old parlour; and there, night after night, sat and smoked his pipe and drank his two glasses of ale, or what not, and always retired home soberly between eleven and twelve o'clock. True, many will say, "What need of this? no man ought to afford it unless he is independent," and so on. Now, if none of us had more than we barely needed, what a world would this be! it neither needs my books nor the engravings which accompany them, and I could name a thousand other things which it as little needs. Hear what the immortal Shakspeare has put into the mouth of Lear on this matter.

> "O reason not the need: our basest beggars
> Are in the poorest things superfluous.
> Allow not nature more than nature needs,
> Man's life is cheap as beasts: thou art a lady,—

> If only to go warm were gorgeous,
> Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wearest,
> Which scarcely keeps thee warm."
>
> ACT II, *Scene* iv.

The old cobbler, who lives opposite, has just gone in with a pint of beer, — what a waste of money, when the waxy old dog has such a big water-butt in his own yard. Yet he is nearly fourscore, and, I doubt not, has for the last fifty years had his two pints of porter a-day: and, I dare be sworn, never dreamed of joining the Tee-totalers. Well, I take up the papers every day, and see dukes and earls, lords and ladies, announcing "splendid dinners" and such like; now, this is but a love of change; they are not satisfied with the regular company who meet in the parlour of "The Old Bull's Head." I have a great veneration for many of our old English families—the true and thoroughbred aristocracy; their names are linked with the great events of my country, and I could almost worship some of the old mansions they dwell in. But they have their own notions of comfort, and so have such as myself; — and, without any disrespect towards them, I would give the preference to a snug parlour, where I can drink my pint of ale and enjoy my bread and cheese without ceremony.

Taverns and road-side houses are great conveniences to both rich and poor; and the gentleman who halts to rest his horses, and refresh himself, would feel as much inconvenience if they were abolished, as the poor wayfarer who halts to eat his crust and drink his half-pint of ale. Tee-totalism and railways are doing much to crush these truly national and ancient haunts of John Bull; but they are rooted in the land — they are natives of the soil — and will never be exterminated while the merry doings of Prince Hal and sack-swallowing Falstaff, and the Boar in Eastcheap, are remembered. A cup of good ale has always been the

emblem of good fellowship in England; nor should I wish to live to see it give place to unmanly tea, coffee,—children's drink,—and greasy chocolate. Let those modern wiseacres, who would convince us that there is but little sustenance in malt liquor, ask those athletic fellows who are cutting through rocks and hills on the railways whether or not they could go through their heavy labour without it, and they will answer, no. It agrees with them,—they are strong, and enjoy perfect health, although their labour is of the hardest; nor could they wheel such barrow-loads up hill on wishy-washy and sloppy Hyson. There is a deal of cant and humbug going on in the present day, of foolish fanaticism and maudlin morality, which to a true-hearted Englishman is sickening. I hate to dwell upon it; and feel half-ashamed of my country, when I contemplate its falling character. God grant that I may never live to see Old England a nation of canting saints and enfeebled water-drinkers! The footstep of John Bull has hitherto sounded firm as the ringing of his own full barrels; he was once a prick-eared Roundhead, but he did not long endure his change. Let him alone, and he knows best what will agree with his capacious stomach; he can fight better, and sleep better too, on beef and ale than on tea and toast; reform all drunkards, and they will have every honest man's praise; but may they feed twelve moons on tea-leaves if they would entirely deprive us of our jolly old ale! I am willing to give them credit for their good intentions, and also to admit that they have done much good, and been the means of reforming many drunkards; so far, their endeavours are praiseworthy, and, prejudiced as I am against their general system, they have for this my hearty thanks. But why should they set their faces against the man who enjoys his pipe and glass, and never was a drunkard? Why refuse to deal at the shop of the old grocer, because

he has been in the habit of taking his pint or two of ale at the "Old Bull's Head," and could not now leave it off; forgetting that "habit is second nature;"—it is here that the system is bad; bad as that of the landlord compelling his tenant to vote the way he pleases. It is depriving a man of his chief blessing, and no longer leaving him a free agent of his own actions, on the one hand, nor of his conscience on the other. Leave those who neither do themselves nor their families any hurt by enjoying their social glass, and spending a pleasant hour amongst their neighbours, the privilege of pleasing themselves, without attempting to injure them, and force them into habits contrary to their inclination by base and unmanly measures. Let those who prefer tea, swallow it until they are as round as a tea-urn,—but do not compel a man

> "To his next neighbour's house, to sit down and take tea with him,
> When he feels all the time that it does not agree with him."

It is, beyond all doubt, a sin to get drunk; but we nowhere read of it being a crime to drink of that which does us good; and there are not a few passages in Scripture that speak of "the heart being made merry with wine;" and the miracle of Cana in Galilee, at the wedding, is not much in favour of water.

I was marvelling the other day how toasts and healths were drunk in these tee-total assemblies, or any other exhilarating scene carried on? Rather difficult, I guess, to toss off a bumper of reeking hot,—and when cold it is nothing; a real tea-drinker could never propose a toast with three times three; or do justice to Her Majesty's health in Hyson; or feel any warm effects even from Gunpowder. But we will turn to one or two of our old poets, and see what they have said in favour of ale; and begir with Bishop Still, who was none the worse a divine for lov-

ing a cup of jolly good ale ; and although he was Bishop of *Bath* and *Wells,* he seems not to have been over fond of water.

" A stoup of ale, then, cannot fail,
To cheer both heart and soul ;
It hath a charm, and without harm
Can make a lame man whole.
For he who thinks, and water drinks,
Is never worth a dump :
Then fill your cup, and drink it up,—
'May he be made a pump !' "

The following stanzas are from an excellent old song in praise of ale.

" The poor man will praise it, so hath he good cause,
That all the year eats neither partridge nor quail,
But sets up his rest, and makes up his feast,
With a crust of brown bread and a pot of good ale.

" The beggar whose portion is always his prayers,
Not having a tatter to hang on his tail,
Is as rich in his rags as the churl in his bags,
If he once but shake hands with a tankard of ale.

" And he that doth dig in the ditches all day,
And quite wearies himself at the plough-tail,
Will speak no less things than of queens and of kings,
If he touch but the top of a pot of good ale.

" And the good old clerk, whose sight waxeth dark,
And ever he thinks that the print is too small,
He will see every letter, and say service better,
If he glaze but his eyes with a pot of good ale.

" They tell whom it kills, but say not a word
How many a man liveth both sound and ha

"Well, if we do nothing worse than drink a cup of good ale now and then," said an old man, the other day, "we shall not have much to trouble our consciences: but I do dislike those poison palaces, where poor wretches rush in every hour to swallow spirits of wine and vitriol, and all such like trash,—which is sold for gin."

The old man was right; there are too many of these glittering entrances to the grave;—these plate-glass undertakers,—drawers to Death,—splendid sin-shops. We have seen so much of the workings of these establishments in our perambulations through London, that the thought of it makes us shudder. Yes, after all we have said, the Temperance Societies, together with the spreading of knowledge, will, ere long, do much towards destroying this evil. But we still stick up for ale,—

"For a quart of ale is a dish for a King."

Well, we will now (when it is time to end) begin our subject, and endeavour to shake off this wandering mood of mind. The Old Bull's Head is a long low public-house, with a thatched roof and old-fashioned windows that project out beyond the porch of the door, and command a view of the opposite roads. This relic of the Elizabethan oriel, or bay window, is fitted up with benches, and is of course the favourite nook of the oldest frequenters of the house, as they are enabled to enjoy their pipe and tankard, and see all that is passing at the same time. Sometimes the worthy host will take his pipe and sit in the porch, exchanging a word or a nod with every one that passes, and when they stay to give their horses a mouthful of water out of the long trough, say, "Won't you go in, John, and sit down a few minutes while your team eats a bit of hay?" Which is a polite way of asking John if he means to go by without calling for a pint or two, for he has a great knack of so

shaping his conversation, that it may be the means of bringing in something to the bar. He will lay down his pipe if any gentleman should chance to ride up; help him to dismount, and praise his horse; and if he does not lead it into the stable, he will take care to place it out of sight before he calls the ostler, wishing to leave an impression that he overlooks everything. He makes a point of drinking with every one who invites him, and this, together with his good living, has given him a shape not unlike the largest jug that stands in the bar. He understands the station of a man at a glance; and doffs his cap to say, "servant, sir," with as much ease as he says, "well, John," or "can't trust." He has what is called a long arm and a short one,—the long one he holds out for the money, and the short one he keeps behind, holding the full pot.

He hates all Tee-totalers, and sometimes thanks Heaven that, in spite of all changes, drinking still continues to be in fashion. By some kind of calculation he seems to know how much money his rackety customers have in their pockets, and shapes his conduct accordingly. He is accustomed to look into the room now and then under pretext of watching the fire, but it is in fact to see who is drinking, and how matters progress, and should he spy an empty pot or two he always walks off with them.

His daughter, perhaps, presides over the bar; a good-looking, merry lass, whose handsome face is the means of bringing as much custom to the house, as the quality of her father's liquors. Like a butterfly she flits here and there, just as fancy guides her; for her healthy-looking old mother, who sits at the table sewing in her spectacles, is ever ready to attend to the bar, when her daughter's back is turned. A strange flirt is that pretty bar-maid, with her hair so tastefully arranged, and her teeth whiter than the foam on her father's best ale. If some old man on horseback halts

at the door and calls for a glass of ale, she gives the signal for Jack to take it. But if, on the other hand, the horseman is young, she takes down the little tray, and the best glass; just runs her fingers through her ringlets, and catches a transient glimpse of herself in the old mirror, then with one of her sweetest smiles presents it herself; and hangs down her head while the young traveller pays some compliment to her beauty; or perhaps says with a pretty toss, or shake of her head, "Ay! I dare say you 'll pay the same compliment when you come to the Blue Bell." Then, if he is a true gallant, he will vow that mine host's daughter—who lives some five miles further on the road—is not worthy to be compared with her. And she, perchance, before the sound of his horse's hoofs have died away, is off to spread the cloth for the young gentleman who with his dog and gun has seated himself in the best parlour, and is also ready with his joke.

Following the old landlord into the large old-fashioned tap-room or kitchen, we there find him in his element, if the company are anyways orderly, and an old farmer or two have dropped in on their way from the far-close, or whilst their horses are baiting before the door. In one corner sits a waggoner, perchance eating his bread-and-cheese, his dog looking up attentively and watching every mouthful which he eats. Beyond him is the farmer's-servant going to the next town with a load of corn; he is discussing his fat bacon and brown bread, and either looking straight forward into the fire while he eats, or laughing at some shrewd remark of mine host's. Perhaps he gets into conversation with the waggoner, and they dwell upon the steepness of some hill; "what hard work it is for the horses," or "what a shame we should have to pay so much at such a toll-gate;" or they tell each other who sells the best ale at the town

to which they are journeying. A drover, whose sheep are huddled together outside, and safely guarded by the dog, tells how many head he sold at the last market, what farmer purchased them, and whither he is bound with the remainder. Then comes the price of corn between the farmers—the appearance of crops—what good hay is fetching a ton — how such and such manure answered on certain lands, and so forth. Mean time the grim blacksmith has entered with the wheelwright, and they are about to have a pot of ale to drink success to the new waggon, which the man has come for. Some strolling tinker, or mechanic on his way to seek employment at the next town, is among the company; and then, perhaps, there are one or two who have had a drop too much overnight at the club, and they are making a day of it; twenty to one running up a score. Then some one who has called in three hours before, perchance, turns to the fuddling tailor and his mate, and says, "Hey! hey! here yet? you're the boys to keep it up." Then, perhaps, the tailor says, "It's a poor heart that never rejoices;" or "All work and no play makes Jack a dull lad;" or perchance, "It's not those who are always at it that get through the most work." "No, nor the most ale either," says the landlord; for it is probably an hour or more since they had their pint filled, and if they have any money, why, he thinks that the sooner they spend it, the sooner they will go to work.

But supposing they are all comfortable and get chatting together, you would be astonished to see how little wit it takes to keep them in good-humour, and how ready those are to laugh at anything the host says who are drinking on credit.

I chanced to call in one day during my rambles, when the landlord was in one of his best moods, and heard, amid a

similar group to that which I have just glanced at above, the following conversation, the first question of which was put by a knowing old farmer who sat beside mine host.

"Now," said he, having taken a good pull at his pint, "if you had a fox, a goose, and a peck of oats to take over the river, and could only take one at once, which should you take first, so that the other might be doing no harm?"

"I should take the fox," answered one.

"Then th' goose would eat th' oats," was the reply.

"Well, then, I should take the goose; the fox wouldn't eat oats, I 'm thinking."

"And which should you take next?" was the interrogation; "if you took the fox he would eat the goose, and if you took the oats, why the goose would eat them."

"Why, then, what would you do?" inquired an old man.

"Do! why take the goose first, to be sure, and then fetch the oats and bring the goose back; then take the fox, and come again for the goose."

Some of them objected to the question as not having been fairly put, since there was no mention made of bringing anyone back.

"Hey!" said the landlord, "you couldn't do it without a little trickery, as Billy Somerset paid his *shot*," (reckoning).

"How was that?" inquired half-a-dozen voices together, their faces all made up beforehand for a good laugh, especially the party who were drinking on credit.

"How was that!" echoed he: "why, if you must know, Billy called one night here while I was at 'Hull Fair;' the rogue well knew that I was safe. Well, you know, I had ta'en my old woman with me, and left Jack there, our ostler, and my daughter Mary housekeepers. Billy came in, (mind you they were both green,) so he had his supper,

a couple of pints of ale, and his bed, and next morning breakfast. After breakfast he had his pipe and another pint of ale; and while my daughter had stepped out to one of the neighbour's houses, he says to John, 'John,' says he, 'what 's my shot.' My daughter had put everything down, so John run his eye over the score, and said, 'two-and-ninepence.' 'Very well,' says Billy; 'drink John — and fill me another pint, just to make three shillings, then I must be off.' John went down into the cellar (for I never like ale to be drawn beforehand) and he 'd no sooner gone down, than Billy jumped up and turned the key, which was always in the door, and locked poor John in; then away he went, leaving him there, and the reckoning unpaid. Nay, dom him, he 'd the impudence, when he met my daughter, to tell her that he 'd left her something for her kindness—he was a strange scamp. At another time he slept in a double-bedded room, and got up before daylight, and put on an old farmer's bran-new suit of clothes, who happened to sleep in the same room; and when the constable overtook Billy, he said he was very sorry, but he must have gone to the wrong chair, on which the clothes were placed. His own suit was worth about fourpence, for the coat had only one sleeve; and his trousers were half-and-half, as one of the legs reached no lower than the knee; but still he stuck to it that it was all a mistake; and when he came back, he would treat the old farmer to a dinner, having given him back his clothes. Well, do you know, before dinner was well over he slipped out, and, bolting off, left the poor farmer the whole of the reckoning to pay."

"Hey!" replied another, lugging in a precious old Joe Millerism. "I knew Billy when he went to school, — a strange dull fellow he was, and there was not a pin to choose between him and the old mistress. When at school he was never able to master the alphabet, and long and many

were the contests between Billy and the old schoolmistress, before he could distinguish the A, B, C, although she had the most original method of teaching him, and really did wonders, considering her oblique vision, which sometimes caused her to see double. 'What letter's that, Billy?' was the old woman's first question; and the drawling reply of, 'Don't know,' was sure to be the pupil's answer. Then in a mild tone she would say, 'What does farmer Kitchen feed his horses with, Billy?' 'Straw and corn,' was the answer. 'No, hay, you great simpleton—that letter's A, H-A-Y,—now remember. What's the next letter, Billy?' 'Don't know,' was the reply, made with an additional scratch of the head. 'What's that flies about in my garden, Billy, with a sharp sting in its tail?' 'A wasp,' was the apt reply of the promising pupil. 'No, you fool, a Bee,—remember B, E.' 'A B, E,' echoed the persevering scholar. 'Well, now, what letter's that, Billy?' 'Don't know,' was readily answered. 'Well, what do I do with my eyes, my boy?' 'Squint,' replied Billy with the most provoking calmness; and for which answer he received a smart rap on the head. 'Squint do I, you dirty dog?—don't I see? Remember C, E, see.' 'C, E,' echoed this progeny of letters.—Poor old Deborah, when we grew bigger and came to read in the Bible, it was a hopeless case; those long hard names were too much for the old woman: in vain we boldly uttered Sennacherib, she would have it pronounced Snap-grap. Her husband was also in every way as original as herself, and one fifth of November undertook to write a new ode, in commemoration of the Gunpowder Plot; for be it known that, amongst other things, he was the parish clerk. The day came when we were to put his poetical abilities to the test, and practise the new music composed by Old Markham, the prince of village fiddlers. The poor clerk mounted his accustomed

station below the pulpit and gave out the first couplet, in clear loud-measured tones, and thus ran the ditty :—

> ' 'Twas on this day, this very day, that Guy Faux did conspire,
> To blow up the house of Parliament with gun-de—pow-de-ire.' "

This was rather more original, but the landlord's laugh was not "ready chorus," at which I began to suspect that the last speaker also might have some trifle on credit, but feared to ask the question.

A conversation then commenced about the quality of wine, and it brought to mind an excellent letter by an old author, from whose works I quoted the Mountebank's Speech. It is so excellent that I must copy a portion.

"The trade of a Vintner is a perfect mystery ; now, as all mysteries in the world are wholly supported by hard and unintelligible terms, so you must take care to christen your wines by some hard names ; the farther fetched the better, and this policy will serve to recommend the most execrable scum in your cellar. A plausible name to an indifferent wine, is what a goodly title is to a fop, or fine clothes to an ordinary woman,—it helps to conceal its defects, and bespeaks the world in its favour. Men naturally love to be cheated, particularly those of our own nation—for the honour of Old England be it spoken—and provided the imposition is not too bare-faced, will meet you half-way with all their hearts. I could name several of our brethren to you who now stand fair to sit in the chair of justice, and sleep in their golden chains at church, that had been forced to knock off long ago, if it had not been for this artifice. It has saved the *Sun* from being eclipsed, the *Crown* from being abdicated, the *Rose* from decaying, and the *Fountain* from being drawn dry. If your own invention is so barren that it wants to be assisted, or you have not geography

enough to christen your wines yourself, I advise you to buy a map of Spain, France, Portugal, and Italy, and there you will find names of places fit for your purpose, and the more uncommon they are the more taking will they be. Do not fail to commend your wines for those very qualities that your customers find fault with. For example, if they say it is sour, or harsh, say, 'Why, gentlemen, it is the nature of true French wine to be so;' if they tell you it is small, you must reply, 'that it has a concealed body;' and if they quarrel with it for being heavy and strong, you may stop their mouths by saying, 'it is so much the fitter for our climate: and that a frieze coat is not false Latin in England, whatever it may be in a warmer country.'

"At other times it will not be amiss to shift your sails after another manner; as for instance: — a company of well-dressed gentlemen come to your house, and in respect to their quality and gaudy outsides, you draw them the best wine in your vaults. 'Pshaw!" says one, 'What the devil have you brought us here?' 'Curse it!' cries another, 'this stuff is not fit to be drunk at a porter's burial.' Then you may harangue them in the following terms:—

"'Why, gentlemen, this wine, and it please you, though it displeases you so much, has the good fortune to be liked by other palates. There is Sir John Squander, and my Lord Topwell, and twenty more I could mention, senators and men of understanding, who drink their gallons of it every night. But to say the truth, 'tis not, between friends, true orthodox; I find your palates are extraordinary, so I will go into the cellar myself, and bring you the flower of Europe. A small parcel of it came over the other day; it only grows in one vineyard, belonging to the monks, — a plague on them! I forget the name of the

place—but no matter. The greatest part was bought for the King's use, against a public entertainment, and the merchant befriended me with the rest.—But, for Heaven's sake, gentlemen, speak not a word of this to any of my customers; you shall have of it for your own company as long as it lasts, but if ever this should be known to my Lord, and Sir John, and others of the nobility, who come to my house, I am undone for ever; therefore, I beg you 'll be secret.'

"Then, fly down stairs like lightning, and bring up a flask of the worst wine you have; take off the oil nicely, and present the glass to one of those judicious gentlemen, and observe how the scene is altered. 'A plague on it, why this will do,' says the first. 'Do!' cries the second, *spitting it critically upon the floor;* 'this is fit for angels, and not poor sinful mortals.' 'Why, Jack,' says a third, 'this is exactly the same wine you and I used to make merry with on the other side of the Alps.' 'An' it please Heaven,' cries the fourth, 'I 'll get my full dose of it to-night. Master, we are obliged to you.'"

A good supper is then bespoke, and drunkenness ensues.

"You desire to know whether a vintner may take advantage of people when they are in their cups, and reckon more than they have had? To this I answer in the affirmative, that you may, providing it is done in the way of trade, and not for any sinister end. Don't you see how, in all other trades, they never scruple to make a penny of a customer's ignorance; else how could a bookseller the other day, have palmed off Æsop's Fables with woodcuts, upon a country girl, for a Common Prayer Book, and told her that Æsop, with his beasts about him, was Adam in Paradise: and is not drunkenness, while it continues upon a man, a state of ignorance?

" Besides, is it not a sin,—a heinous sin? and ought not we, that are in some measure accessary to it, to mortify and punish it? And does anything more disturb the conscience of an Englishman than to make his pocket do penance? And, after all, if the hand is discovered, (and 'tis ten to one whether it be or not,) the master of the house is not at all affected by it. A landlord, like the King, can do no wrong; the bar may mistake,—the drawer may be drunk, and mis-reckon,—but a master is not to suffer for the transgressions of his servants; for even General Councils, with the Pope at the head of them, are not infallible. The poor girl at the bar, is but just come out of the country, and the noise of the bell, or the hurry of business, distracted her; and to make amends, you must call for your flask;—and so the farce concludes. You are a young beginner, therefore, follow my directions, and clap a muzzle upon your conscience: when you have got twenty thousand pounds in your pocket, you may take off your muzzle if you think fit. Then you may shut up your doors at nine, look as discreetly as any hypocrite in the city; forbid singing of catches in your house; deliver a gill of wine through the little wicket only, on the Lord's day; call Sunday the Sabbath; strut to the parish church at the head of half-a-dozen drawers, lugging a Geneva Bible amongst them; and take the sermon in short-hand, as many of your predecessors, when they thought they were wealthy enough to deserve damnation, have done before you."

There is a fine vein of irony and humour running throughout the whole of this epistle; some of the arguments are worthy of comparison beside those which that inimitable old villain, Falstaff, makes use of. Although written a century and a half ago, we doubt not but that it is a true picture of the rogueries practised by the vintners of that period,

for the author was pretty familiar with the customs of the taverns, being the great wit and lion of his day. But here we must bring this rambling chapter to a close, our next article being one of a different nature, and will require the reader's closer attention, if he or she love old-fashioned poetry, which, as Izaak Walton says, "is choicely good."

ENGLAND'S HELICON.

> The isle is full of noises,
> Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
> Sometimes a thousand twanging instruments
> Will hum about mine ears: and sometimes voices,
> That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
> Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
> The clouds, methought, would open, and show riches,
> Ready to drop upon me, that when I waked,
> I cried to dream again.
>
> *The Tempest.*

As we have already done by the poetry of William Browne, in our present work, so shall we endeavour in this, our last paper, to give a few extracts from "England's Helicon," a collection of poems, first published in the year 1600; and point out to our readers a few of its chief beauties. Saving to a few lovers of old books, the work is but little known; and those extracts which have been taken from it, and appeared in one or two collections of poetry, give but a faint representation of its many merits. For many years it was only to be found locked up in the cabinet of some old bookworm; for at Stevens's sale a copy was sold for eleven pounds fifteen shillings; and although the work was reprinted under the joint editorship of Sir Egerton Brydges and Mr. Haslewood, yet its price would prevent it from falling into many hands. Most of the authors were living at the time of the first publication of the work,

and those who never before heard of it, will be astonished to find that amongst its contributors are to be found the names of William Shakspeare, Edmund Spenser, Michael Drayton, Sir Philip Sydney, Sir Walter Raleigh, Christopher Marlow, Fulke Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, Edward Vere Earl of Oxford, Henry Howard Earl of Surrey, Nicholas Breton, whose name our readers are already acquainted with, through the little gem which we have extracted at the end of "Country Courtship;" William Browne, whose poetry we hope our readers will never forget, as we dedicated a whole chapter to it. These, besides many others, only known to those who are well read in the old poets, were contributors to "England's Helicon," into the pages of which we are about to conduct such of our readers as love old English poetry. Those who care nothing about it, will, we fear, begrudge the labour of stepping back nearly three centuries, and spending an hour in such pleasant contemplation as the perusal of ancient poetry.

Much as we like to make our readers acquainted with what we have discovered that is really good in poetry, we could not well intersperse the present work with extracts, after the manner of the "*Beauties of the Country*," as the whole arrangement is different We have therefore dedicated two articles entirely to poetry, well knowing the satisfaction that the extracts must give to all who peruse them; and right proud shall we be if our labours contribute towards bringing about a greater love for the Muses,—for in this day they are both abused and neglected.

We are not one of those so wrapt up in the poetry of olden time, as to believe that our own day has produced nothing equal to it, but, on the contrary, admit that the poetry of the present age is not so much disfigured by those quaint conceits and far-fetched ideas as the age of Elizabeth. Even our own god-like Shakspeare was not free from the conta-

mination, for in one place he speaks of "Scaring the moon with splinters," and in another Cleopatra calls upon Antony to

> "Leap into her heart, armour and all,
> And ride upon its pants triumphing."

A most dainty conceit, and such as only a great poet could have struck out; and when inferior ones come to draw at the same hyperbolical source, they speedily bring it down to nonsense. Then again, they aimed at alliteration, and often sacrificed the sense to indulge in their own vagaries of sound; but in spite of a few of these drawbacks, many of them were sterling fellows, and it is a question if in one country and in one age, such an assemblage of genius will ever be met with again. When we look back upon the period and contemplate its mighty character, it is like viewing the interior of some magnificent cathedral, its solemn aisles adorned with the statues of departed greatness, and high above all, the figure of Shakspeare, standing in the marble majesty of thought, as the presiding genius. Be it also remembered that from the time of Chaucer up to the period of which we are writing, poetry made but little progress in England. And although the intervening space was not entirely dark, yet so feeble was the glimmering which fell upon it, that it resembled the deep twilight which settles on a mighty desert, where amid the vast space and the almost interminable distance, the objects are but faintly seen. True, the writings of Lydgate and Occleve possess great merit, and in the works of the former are to be found passages of surpassing beauty; and should no abler hand arise to point these out, we may some day bring our own humble efforts to the task. Sharon Turner, in his History of the Middle Ages, has brought them forward; but that admirable work is not within everybody's reach; neither is Warton's History of Poetry.

We must not, however, pass over the name of Skelton; many of his pieces are rich in humour and description; and, in spite of the short metre in which some of them are written, will be found very interesting. Some of the short lines seem to make the thoughts glide away too rapidly, and you find yourself at the bottom of a page before you have ascertained the true cut, ornaments, and colour of a tunic.

Returning to the writers of the Elizabethan era, we must be prepared for the perusal of their works, by making an ample allowance for their far-fetched conceits, as it was the custom of the period to chase a thought until it could be followed no further: such, for instance, as the following is often found, which may be called playing with poetry.

"Fair in a morn. O fairest morn!
Was never morn so fair:
There shone a sun, though not the sun
That shineth in the air.
* * * *
He pity cried and pity came,
And pitied so his paine,
As dying would not let him die,
But gave him life again."

A poem must not be thrown aside because it contains such alliterative conceits as the above, for ten to one the author bestowed more labour to spoil his verses by such like affectations as these than he did to produce the best passages in his works; like those who waste hours in tying a cravat, to give it the appearance of having been done carelessly. Such a surly critic as Dr. Johnson, who after all cared but little for the spiritual and ideal beauty of poetry, would have been likely enough to have thrown a volume containing such passages as the above out of the window, with a growl, without deigning to bestow further notice upon it, forgetting that fashion calls upon many a sensible man

to wear a dress which he despises, and which he only assumes to prevent himself from appearing remarkable.

To appreciate the beautiful in poetry, requires at times a high order of intellect; for what often appears to an ordinary mind mere nonsense, may to one of a more cultivated taste present the true germ of pure poetry. So in looking at a picture, one who possesses no innate perception of the beautiful, would see as much to admire in the cast-iron copy of one of Gainsborough's landscapes on a tea-board, as he would in the original itself; the floating mists, the proper diffusion of light and shade, the depth and the pervading atmosphere, that give such a life-like reality to the landscape, would to him be entirely lost. The poetry of Pope, Churchill, and others, they can generally understand, because these authors never soar into the highest regions of the imagination, great although they are in their way. But assuredly it requires a higher order of intellect to understand and feel such passages as those in Shakspeare, where

> "Grief fills the room up of my absent child:"

and again, beginning with —

> "Within the hollow crown,
> That rounds the mortal temples of a king,
> Death keeps his court," etc.

Here the imagery must be filled up; every line in the latter must be peopled after some form or other, to work out the meaning of the poet; you cannot hurry over it, and catch all its beauties. So Milton makes Eve stand "Half-spied, so thick the blushing roses round about her growed." His expression also of "Silence was pleased," belongs to the beautiful and apparently mysterious in poetry. So does the war-horse in the Bible, whose "neck is clothed in thunder."

Without bringing any criticism to bear upon poetry, it may be measured by the effect it produces on the feelings, as we have before stated, especially such as appeals to the heart; for some, like landscape paintings, aim no higher than to please. Others, again, set the blood racing through the veins,—now we are carried away with the glow of passion, then cold with fear or sympathy, and seeming to feel even "misery's love."

Between ourselves and our reader, there is, we trust, no secret; our remarks in this and the preceding paper on poetry do not arise out of any wish to make a display of opinion, but rather to show the effects produced on a mind which has been left to form itself, having had neither guide nor instructor to direct its thoughts, but steering on through truth and error, and arriving at the conclusions which are here given, without any cultivated prejudice. Out of many opinions only can we hope to reach a right one; and he who candidly delivers himself of his sincere sentiments (even if they be wrong), does no harm intentionally; the most sweeping ground-swell, that makes muddy the sea, often throws on shore some treasure. Mankind have all their different tastes; and among the most flexible, what their own judgments at first condemned, fashion prevails upon them to admire: the same with that which is at first unpalatable and is after a time liked; so in colours or ornaments, in the choice of flowers, the fancy of dress; and he who endeavours to bring all people to think alike, will undertake a greater task than the well-known individual who covered his walls with watches and laboured hard to make them all beat to the self-same moment of time. That which affords pleasure or amusement is never so minutely examined as that which labours to change old and rooted opinions, and yet both have their effects on the mind; and the one, without appearing to try, often accom-

plishes what the other strives so assiduously to complete. So do we, in the present article, and in our former one on the poetry of "Browne's Pastorals," hope to amuse our readers by our homely and honest opinion, without seeking or labouring to change theirs, and to bring about a greater love for our old writers than that which now prevails, quite sure that such a pleasing change would lead them to form a more just appreciation of modern poetry, and that many new works, which are now comparatively forgotten, would sooner be brought to occupy that rank in the opinion of the world which they are destined some day to receive. We should then hope to reverse the present system of judgment, and instead of testing the merits of works by words, test them by the higher standard of thought,— for by such a rule ought poetry to be tried. Thought is its life and soul, which exist when the body and words are forgotten; the thought is felt without a sound, — we forget all the jingle of the metre while contemplating it. We listen to the crash, and brood over the havoc which is going on

> "When the thick rotundity of the world is struck flat;"

the soul sinks beneath the rushing ruin, and thought and feeling become one.

Alas! ours is a low and lonely voice, sounding faintly and near at hand, and will die within hearing of its own sound. Those tongues which, when uplifted, could awaken a thousand echoes, are almost silent now; a deep mist and a heavy slumber seem to have fallen upon the region of poetry; and those who are awake, grope their way disregarded through the fog, and call upon the sleepers to arouse themselves, without being heard. The deep thunder that boomed month after month over the land from our periodicals has almost died away, and we, left almost

alone to lift up our feeble voice in the silence, like "Fear, recoil back at the sounds we have made."

But this last thought from Collins brings us back to the remembrance of our task, and also to the recollection of a stanza, which we have marked in the old work we are about to treat of, the author of the "Ode on the Passions" must have had in his mind when he described Fear. It is by Sir Phillip Sydney, and runs as follows,

> "A Satyr once did run away for dread,
> With sound of horn which he himself did blow."

We will no longer withhold our readers from the rich treasure which we have in store for them,—and here is such a Madrigal as they meet not with every day; it was written by Thomas Lodge.

ROSALIND'S MADRIGAL.

"Love in my bosom, like a bee,
Doth suck his sweet;
Now with his wings he plays with me,
Now with his feet.
Within mine eyes he makes his nest,
His bed amidst my tender breast,
My kisses are his daily feast,
And yet he robs me of my rest,—
Ah! wanton, will ye?

"And if I sleep, then pierceth he
With pretty slight,
And makes his pillow of my knee
The live-long night.
Strike I my lute, he tunes the string;
He music plays if I but sing;
He lends me every lovely thing;
Yet, cruel he, my heart doth sting;
Whist, wanton!—still ye!

" Else I with roses every day
Will whip ye hence,
And bind ye when ye long to play,
For your offence.
I 'll shut my eyes to keep ye in ;
I 'll make you fast it for your sin ;
I 'll count your power not worth a pin :—
Alas ! what hereby shall I win
If he gainsay me ?

" What if I beat the wanton boy
With many a rod ?
He will repay me with annoy,
Because a god.
Then sit thou safely on my knee,
And let thy bower my bosom be ;
Lurk in mine eyes, I like of thee,
O Cupid ! so thou pity me,—
Spare not, but play thee."

Twenty to one, reader, thou didst never hear the name of Thomas Lodge before, and mayest marvel to know that this gem first appeared in " The Golden Legacy," in 1590, and was from thence transferred to the present work, in 1600. But as it has before been quoted by Beloe, we will give a few specimens which are less known by this fine old poet ; some of them, too, containing a vein of poetry not unworthy of the best of our own English authors ; witness the following from

DAMON'S PASTORALS.

" Homely hearts do harbour quiet,
Little fear and mickle solace ;
States suspect their bed and diet,
Fear and craft do haunt the palace.
Little would I, little want I,
Where the mind and store agreeth ;
Smallest comfort is not scantie ;
Least he longs that little seeth.

Time hath been that I have longed,
Foolish I, to like of folly,
To converse where honour thronged,
To my pleasures linked wholly.
Now I see, and seeing sorrow,
That the day consumed returns not:
Who dare trust upon to-morrow,
When nor time, nor life sojourn not?"

Here is a whole sermon given in the compass of sixteen lines; as for the last four, the wisest man living may commit them to memory and find his mind improved by often repeating them. Another extract or two from our author, and we must then point out a few beauties in the writings of other contributors to this early collection of English poetry.

"A turtle sat upon a leafless tree,
Mourning her absent fair,
With sad and sorry cheer;
About her wondering stood
The citizens o' th' wood,
And whilst her plumes she rents [rends]
And for her love laments,
The stately trees complain them,
The birds with sorrow pain them:
Each one that doth her view,
Her pains and sorrows rue."

Here is another of his verses, which has been pretty well used by the song-writers since his day.

"First shall the heavens want starry light,
The sea be robbed of her waves;
The day want sun, and sun want bright;
The night want shade, the dead men, graves:
The April flowers, and leaves the tree.
* * * * *
And pleasure mourn, and sorrow smile,
Before I talk to thee of guile.

Like to the clear in highest sphere,
Where all imperial glory shines,
Of self-same colour is her hair,
Whether unfolded or in twines:
Her eyes are sapphires set in snow,
Resembling Heaven.

* * * * *

Nature herself her shape admires,
The gods are wounded in her sight;
And Love forsakes his heavenly fires
And at her eyes his brand doth light.
Heigh ho! would she were mine!"

From the preface to the "Golden Legacy," it appears that these beautiful poems were written during a voyage to the Canaries, between 1570 and 1580, or thereabouts. There is a good deal of the rough sailor about his introduction. Take the following specimen, and with it our farewell to Thomas Lodge.

"TO THE GENTLEMEN READERS.

"Here you may find some leaves of Venus's myrtle, but hewn down by a soldier with his cuttle-axe, not bought with the allurement of a filed tongue. To be brief, gentlemen, room for a soldier and a sailor that gives you the fruits of his labour, *which he wrote on the sea, where every line was wet with a surge, and every humorous passion counterchecked with a storm; if you like it, so,* * * But if Momus, or any disquieted ass, that hath mighty ears to conceive with Midas, and yet little to judge; if he come aboard our bark to find fault with our tackling when he knows not the shrouds, I'll down into the hold and fetch out a rusty poll-axe, that saw no sun for seven years,

and either will bebaste him, or heave the coxcomb overboard to feed cods.

* * * * * *

"Having with Captain Clark made a voyage to the Islands of Terceiras and the Canaries, to beguile the time with labour, I writ this book, *rough as if hatched in the storms of the ocean, and feathered in the surges of many perilous seas.*"

He could not even get through his dedication without giving utterance to poetry, witness those passages which we have marked in Italics.

Our next extract shall be from Nicholas Breton, of whom we have already spoken in a former part of this work.

"The deer do browse upon the brier,
The birds do pick the cherries;
And will not beauty grant desire
One handful of her berries?
If it be so that thou hast sworn,
That none shall look on thee,
Yet let me know thou dost not scorn
To cast a look on me."

But we have quoted his best piece at the end of "Country Courtship," and shall leave him for the present, and turn to the writings of Sir Walter Raleigh, giving first an extract from

THE SHEPHERD TO THE FLOWERS.

"Sweet violets (love paradise) that spread
Your gracious odours, which you couched bear
Within your palie faces:
Upon the gentle wing of some calm-breathing wind
That plays amid the plain,
If by the favour of propitious star you gain
Such grace as in my lady's bosom place to find,
Be proud. * * * *

Your honours of the flowery meads I pray,
You pretty daughters of the earth and sun,
With mild and seemly breathing straight display
My bitter sighs, that have my heart undone."

The following is very rural.

" In peascod time, when hound to horn
Gives ear till buck be kill'd ;
And little lads with pipes of corn
Sit keeping beasts a-field ;
I went to gather strawberries,
By woods and groves full fair,
And parched my face with Phœbus so,
By walking in the air,
That down I laid me by a stream
With boughs all over clad,
And there I met the strangest dream,
That Shepherd ever had."

The dream displays a great power of fancy, and many very beautiful thoughts, such as you look for in vain in any but the quaint writers of this period; it is, however, too long for our pages. Our next describes

A FROZEN SNAKE.

" The frozen snake oppressed with heaped snow,
By struggling hard gets out her tender head,
And spies far off, from where she lies below,
The winter sun that from the north is fled ;
But all in vain she looks upon the light,
Where heat is wanting to restore her might."

Our next extracts are from Richard Barnfield, author of the " Affectionate Shepherd," 1594, and one or two other works which were published during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and are but little known. The following is very beautiful, and bears some resemblance to one of Shakspeare's short

pieces. It has been erroneously attributed to Sir Walter Raleigh.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

" As it fell upon a day,
In the merry month of May,
Sitting in a pleasant shade
Which a group of myrtles made ;
Beasts did leap, and birds did sing ;
Trees did grow, and plants did spring ;
Every thing did banish moan
Save the nightingale alone.
She poor bird, as all forlorn,
Lean'd her breast against a thorn,
And there sung the dolefull'st ditty :
' Fie, fie, fie,' now would she cry ;
' Teru, teru,' by and by ;
That to hear her so complain
Scarce I could from tears refrain ;
For her grief so lively shown,
Made me think upon my own.
Ah ! (thought I) thou mourn'st in vain,
None take pity on thy pain.
Senseless trees, they cannot hear thee ;
Ruthless beasts, they will not cheer thee ;
King Pandion he is dead,
All thy friends are lapt in lead ;
All thy fellow birds do sing,
Careless of thy sorrowing :
Even so, poor bird ! like thee,
None alive will pity me."

The subject of the poem which we have quoted, be it remembered, was not so hackneyed two hundred and fifty years ago as it is now, therefore we must give the author credit for such thoughts as it possesses being his own. There are some delightful bits scattered here and there over his—

SHEPHERD'S ODE.

" Nights were short, and days were long,
Blossoms on the hawthorn hung:
Philomel (night-music's king)
Told the coming in of Spring,
Whose sweet silver-sounding voice,
Made the little birds rejoice,
Skipping light from spray to spray,
Till Aurora show'd the day."

We will next cull a few flowers from the old-fashioned beds which Michael Drayton has planted in this quaint English garden; sorry enough that the size of our work prevents us from sticking in a huge nosegay amid its pages. Here is a stanza containing a thought which has been used a thousand times. It is from his—

SHEPHERD'S DAFFODIL.

" Through yonder vale as I did pass,
Descending from the hill,
I met a smirking bonny lass,
They call her Daffodil;
Whose presence as along she went
The pretty flowers did greet,
As though their heads they downward bent
With homage to her feet."

FLOWERS.

" Why look those flowers so pale and ill
That once attired this goodly heath?

She hath robb'd Nature of her skill,
And sweetens all things with her breath."

BROOKS.

" Why slide these brooks so slow away,
Whose bubbling murmur pleased the ear ?

Oh ! marvel not although they stay,
When they her heavenly voice do hear."

LOVE.

" Calm winds, blow you fair ;
Rock her, thou sweet gentle air :
Oh ! the morn is noon,
The evening comes too soon
To part my love and me !
The roses and thy lips do meet,
Oh ! that life were half so sweet !
Who would respect his breath
That might die such a death ?
All the bushes that be near
With sweet nightingales beset,
Hush, sweet, and be still,
Let them sing their fill.
There 's none our joys to let." [prevent]

A PICTURE.

" Near to a bank with roses set about,
Where pretty turtles joining bill to bill,
And gentle springs steal softly murmuring out,
Washing the foot of Ida's sacred hill,—
There little Love sore wounded lies,
His bow and arrows broken."

Our next extract is very curious — some of the lines are excellent : the poem describes a meeting of birds to argue

upon love. It is signed Shepherd Tonic,—a fictitious signature, beyond doubt. It is, however, supposed to have been written by Anthony Munday, whose "Banquet of Daintie Conceits" was published in 1588; but this is mere conjecture. There are seven poems in "England's Helicon" bearing the same signature.

MEETING OF THE BIRDS.

"Every bird sits on his bough
As brag as he that is the best,
* * * *
Hark! hark! hark! the nightingale,
In her mourning lay:
She tells her stories—woful tale—
To warn ye if she may.
'Fair maids, take heed of love,
It is a perilous thing,
As Philomel herself did prove—
Abused by a king.

"'If kings play false, believe no men
That make a seemly outward show;
But caught once, beware then,
For then begins your woe.
They will look babies in your eyes,
And speak as fair as fair may be,—
But trust them in no wise;
Example take by me.'

"'Fie, fie!' said the throstle-cock,
'You are much to blame;
For one man's fault all men to blot,
Impairing their good name.
Admit you were used amiss
By that ungentle king,
It follows not, that you for this
Should all men's honour wring

" ' There be good, and there be bad ;
And some are false, and some are true ;
As good choice is still had
Among us men as you.
Women have faults as well as we,
Some say for our one they have three :
Then smite not, nor bite not,
When you as faulty be.'

" ' Peace, peace !' quoth Madge Howlet then,
Sitting out of sight,
' For women are as good as men,
And both are good alike.'
' Not so,' said the little Wren,
' Difference there may be ;
The cock always commands the hen ;
The men shall go for me.'

" Then robin redbreast, stepping in,
Would needs take up this tedious strife,
Protesting ' True loving
In either lengthen'd life :
If I love you, and you love me,
Can there be better harmony ?
Then ending, contending,
Love must the umpire be.' "

To us, who love this old-fashioned kind of fable, there is something very amusing in the above extract ; nor will it lose anything if read beside Cowper's poem on a similar subject.

As there are contributions by forty different authors to this work, we are compelled to limit our extracts to such pieces as border upon the descriptive or approach the rural, nor shall we be able to give a specimen of the poetry of each of the authors.

The following has no name to it, but was copied from " Mr. Bird's Set Songs," into " England's Helicon."

THE HERDSMAN'S HAPPY LIFE.

" What pleasure have great Princes
More dainty to their choice,
Than herdsmen wild—who careless
In quiet life rejoice?
And fortune's fate not fearing,
Sing sweet in summer morning.

" Their dealings plain and rightful,
Are void of all deceit;
They never know how spiteful
It is to kneel and wait
On favourite presumptuous,
Whose pride is vain and sumptuous.

" All day their flocks each tendeth,
At night they take their rest,
More quiet than he who sendeth
His ship into the East.
Where gold and pearl are plenty,
But getting very dainty.

" For lawyers and their pleading
They esteem it not a straw;
They think that honest meaning
Is of itself a law:
Where conscience judgeth plainly
They spend no money vainly.

" Oh! happy who thus liveth,
Not caring much for gold,
With clothing which sufficeth
To keep him from the cold;
Though poor and plain his diet,
Yet merry it is and quiet."

Saving that sweet song of Shakspeare's beginning with—

" Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,"

we know not another that breathes such an air of rural content and pastoral happiness, as the one here quoted. Not a thought is out of place; the images, drawn from the bustle of business and the cares of money-getting men, form a fine contrast to that calm quietude, which undisturbed by weighty matters can

"Sing sweet on summer morning."

We may be wrong, but are inclined to believe that it was written by Shakspeare; there is a masterly ease and freedom about it so like that which pervades all his lyrical compositions.

Edward Bolton next claims our notice; for some of his pieces are excellent, and, as we shall endeavour to prove, occasionally contain such thoughts as are seldom met with in any other poet. There is some mention made of him in Warton's "History of English Poetry;" he is supposed to have been a retainer to the Duke of Buckingham, and in 1610 he published a small quarto work, entitled, "The Elements of Armories." Our first extract is from his—

HYMN FOR CHRISTMAS.

"*You gentle flocks, whose fleeces, pearl'd with dew,*
Resemble heaven, whom golden drops make bright,
Listen! O listen now! O not to you
Our pipes make sport to shorten weary night;
But voices most divine
Make blissful harmony,—
Voices that seem to shine,
For what else clears the sky?
Tunes can we hear, but not the singers see,—
The tune 's divine, and so the singers be."

All who have read Bloomfield's "Farmer's Boy" must

remember that beautiful line wherein he describes the stars as

" The beauteous 'semblance of a flock at rest."

No one can for a moment suppose that he ever saw the present poem; yet witness the next three lines as a proof how true poetical minds are alike struck with the same thoughts, yet each varying in the expression,—

" *Lo! how the firmament,*
Within an azure fold,
The flock of stars hath pent,
That we might them behold.
Yet from their beams proceedeth not this light,
Nor can their crystals such reflection give.
What then doth make the element so bright?
The heavens are come down upon earth to live.

" Sprung is the perfect day
By prophets seen afar:
Sprung is the mirthful May
Which Winter cannot mar:
In David's city doth this Sun appear."

Fain would we give the whole of this beautiful hymn; but our volume is now drawing to a close, and we can only snatch a few beauties here and there, just to let our readers see what stores of delightful poetry are yet laid up in the rich treasury of our old English poets. The following are also from the same author:—

" A veil of lawn, like vapour thin,
Unto her ancle trails,
Through which the shapes discern'd bin,
As to and fro it sails,

" The thorough shining air, I ween,
Is not so perfect clear,
As is the sky of her fair skin,
Whereon no spots appear."

EARTHLY HONOURS.

" As withereth the primrose by the river,
As fadeth summer's sun from gliding fountains,
As vanisheth the light-blown bubble ever,
As melteth snow upon the massy mountains ;
So melts, so vanisheth, so fades, so withers,
The rose, the shine, the bubble, and the snow
Of praise, pomp, glory, joy—which short life gathers.
Fair praise, vain pomp, sweet glory, brittle joy,
The wither'd primrose by the mourning river,
The faded summer sun from weeping fountains,
The light-blown bubble vanishēd for ever,
The molten snow upon the naked mountains,
Are emblems— that the treasures we up-lay
Soon wither, vanish, fade, and melt away."

Robert Green has seven poems in the present collection ; but, from what we remember of his writings, some of them appear inferior to those we have before seen. One stanza, however, has been thought to resemble the opening of Gray's " Elegy," it is as follows :—

" When tender ewes, brought home with evening sun
Wend to their fold,
And to their hold
The shepherds trudge when light of day is done."

MENAPHON TO PERSAN.

" Fair fields, proud Flora's vaunt, why is 't you smile
When as I languish ?
You golden meads, why shine you to beguile
My weeping anguish ?
I live to sorrow, you to pleasure spring :
Why do you spring thus ?
What, will not Boreas, tempest's wrathful King,
Take some pity on us ?

And send forth Winter in her rusty weed
To wail my bemoanings."

FAIR SAMELA.

" Like to Diana in her summer weed
Girt with a crimson robe of brightest dye,
Goes fair Samela.
Whiter than be the flocks that straggling feed,
When washed by Arethusa faint they lie,
Is fair Samela.
" As fair Aurora, in her morning gray,
Decked with the ruddy glitter of her love,
Is fair Samela.
Like lovely Thetis on a calmēd day,
When as her brightness Neptune's fancies move,
Shines fair Samela,
Her tresses gold, her eyes like glossy streams."

Smooth and fanciful as Green's writings are, they are not the best by far in the volume; and among such a number of authors, it is difficult to make a selection. We will, however, give another specimen of his powers.

MONTANUS HIS MADRIGAL.

" It was a vallie gawdie greene,
Where Dian at the fount was seene;
Green it was
And did passe
All other of Dianae's bowers.
In the pride of Flora's flowers.

" A fount it was that no sunne sees,
Circled in with cypres trees.
Set so nigh,
As Phœbus' eye,
Could not doe the virgins scathe,
To see them naked when they bathe.

" She sate there all in white,
Colour fitting her delight:
Virgins so
Ought to goe;
For white in armourie is placed,
To be the colour that is chaste.

" Her taffata cassock you might see
Tucked up above her knee;
Which did shew,
There below,
Legges as white as whale's bone.
So white and chaste was never known.

" Hard by her upon the ground,
Sate her virgins in a round;
Bathing theire
Golden haire,
And singing all in notes hie,
' Fie on Venus' flattering eye!

" ' Fie on Love, it is a toy;
Cupid, witlesse, and a boy.
All his fires,
And desires,
Are plagues that God sent from on high
To pester men with miserie.'

" As thus the virgins did disdaine
Lovers' joy and lovers' paine,
Cupid nigh,
Did espie,
Grieving at Dianae's song,
Slily stole these maids among.

" His bow of steele, darts of fire,
He shot amongst them sweet desire;
Which straite flies
In their eyes,
And at the entrance made them start,
For it ran from eye to heart.

" Calisto strait supposed Jove
Was faire and frolique for to love.
Dian she
'Scaped not free ;
For well I wote heere upon
She loved the swaine Endymion.

" Clithia, Phœbus, and Chloris' eye
Thought none so faire as Mercurie ;
Venus thus
Did discusse,
By her sonne in darts of fire
None so chaste to check desire.

" Dian rose with all her maydes,
Blushing thus at Love's braides.
With sighs all
Shew their thrall :
And flinging thence pronounced this saw,
' What so strong as Love's sweet law ? ' "

Our next extract is from Henry Constable. Malone has reprinted his " Song of Venus and Adonis " in his notes to the tenth volume of Shakspeare's Works ; it is supposed to have preceded Shakspeare's poem on that subject, and one critic says, " far excels it," — but he forgot to point out the passages.

We give one of his little pieces complete.

SONG TO DIAPHENIA.

" Diaphen 's like the daffy-down-dilly,
White as the sun, fair as the lily,
Heighho ! how I do love thee !
I do love thee as my lambs
Are beloved of their dams :
How blest were I if thou wouldst prove me !

" Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as each flower
Loves the sun's life-giving power:
For dead, thy breath to life might move me!

" Diaphenia, like to all things bless'd,
When all thy praises are express'd,
Dear joy, how I do love thee!
As the birds do love the spring;
Or the bees their careful king:—
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me!"

The following poem, which is signed W. H., and supposed to have been written by William Herbert, is very beautiful. The author, we believe, is unknown; for we think the date of 1600 is much too early for the writings of Herbert. It may have been written by William Hunnis; there is some mention of him in the Preface to " The Paradise of Dainty Devices."

WODENFRIDE'S SONG, ETC.

" The sun, and season in each thing
Revive new pleasure; the sweet spring
Hath put to flight the winter keen,
To glad our lovely summer queen.

" The paths where Amargana treads,
With flowery tapestry Flora spreads;
And Nature clothes the ground in green,
To glad our lovely summer queen.

" The groves put on their rich array,
With hawthorn blooms embroider'd gay:
And sweet perfumed with eglantēne,
To glad our lovely summer queen.

" The silent river stays his course,
While along his crystal source ;
The silver-scalēd fish are seen
To glad our lovely summer queen.

" The wood at her fair sight rejoices,
The little birds with their loud voices
In concert on the briers been, [are]
To glad our lovely summer queen.

" The fleecy flocks do scud and skip,
The wood-nymphs, fauns, and satyrs trip,
And dance the myrtle trees between,
To glad our lovely summer queen."

There is a genuine smack of the true old English ballad style in the following " Jig," as it is called; and we doubt not but that it has been sung thousands of times at rural merry-makings in the good old times of Queen Elizabeth. The piece is signed John Wooton, and is supposed to be the same person that Izaak Walton speaks of, as " A gentleman exceedingly accomplished both by learning and travel; who was knighted by Queen Elizabeth, and looked upon with more than ordinary favour, and with intentions of preferment; but death, in his younger years, put a period to his growing hopes." This, however, is but a conjecture of Anthony Wood's.

DAMETAS.—HIS JIGGE IN PRAISE OF HIS LOVE.

" Jolly shepherd, shepherd on a hill,
On a hill so merrily,
On a hill so cherrily,
Fear not shepherd there to pipe thy fill,
Fill every dale, fill every plain,
Both sing and say, Love feels no pain.

" Jolly shepherd, shepherd on a green,
On a green so merrily,
On a green so cherrily,
Be thy voice shrill, be thy mirth seen,
Heard to each swain, seen to each trull,
Both sing and say, Love's joy is full.

" Jolly shepherd, shepherd in the sun,
In the sun so merrily,
In the sun so cherrily,
Sing forth thy songs, and let thy rhymes run,
Down to the dales, to the hills above,
Both sing and say, no life like Love!

" Jolly shepherd, shepherd in the shade,
In the shade so merrily,
In the shade so cherrily,
Joy in thy life, life of shepherd's trade,
Joy in thy love, love full of glee,
Both sing and say, sweet Love for me!

" Jolly shepherd, shepherd here or there,
Here or there so merrily,
Here and there so cherrily,
Or in thy chat, or at thy cheer,
In every jigge, in every lay,
Both sing and say: Love lasts for aye!" [ever].

Now for an extract from Edmund Spenser; and one which we doubt not will be new to the thousands who admire the works of the author of the " Faery Queen," It goes off like a peal of bells on a holiday eve.

CUDDIE'S ROUNDELAY.

" It fell upon a holy-eve.
Heigho, holy-day!
When holy fathers went to shrive
Now begins this Roundelay.

Sitting upon a hill so high,
Heigho, the high hill!
The while my flock did feed thereby,
The while the shepherd's self did spill.*

"I saw the bouncing Bonny Bell,
Heigho, Bonny Bell!
Tripping alone across the dell,
She can hip it very well;
Well deck'd in a frock of gray,
Heigho! gray is greete, [greeted or saluted]
And in a kirtle of green say,
The green is for maidens meet.

"A chaplet on her head she wore,
Heigho, the chaplet!
Of sweet violets therein was store;
She 's sweeter than the violet.
My sheep did leave their wonted food,
Heigho, silly sheep!
And stared on her as they were wood, [mad, stupid]
Wood as he that did them keep.

"As the bonny lass passed by,
Heigho, bonny lass!
She roll'd at me her glancing eye,
As clear as is the cyrstal glass,
Or as the sunbeam so bright,
Heigho, the sunbeam!
Glanceth from Phœbus' face forth-right,
So love into my heart did stream."

The Roundelay has five more stanzas; but here we must stop, as the whole is much too lengthy for our volume. The above extracts cannot fail of bringing to the reader's mind the ancient burthens of many of those sweet snatches of song, which Shakspeare has scattered like everlasting flowers over his pages.

There are several poems by Spenser in this ancient volume, which I have never met with in his works.

* Spell, or Spill, *Saxon.* To sport, or play.—Glossary to Chaucer.

The following beautiful poem is supposed to have been written by John Ford, the old dramatist: it is signed J. F. and entitled—

THE SHEPHERD'S SORROW FOR HIS PHŒBE'S DISDAIN.

"Oh! woods, unto your walks my body hies,
To loose the trayterous bonds of tyring love;
Where trees, where hearbs, where flowers,
Their native moisture poures.
From forth their tender stalks to helpe mine eyes:
Yet their united teares may nothing move.

"When I behold the faire adorned tree,
Which lightning's force and winter's frost resists;
Then Daphne's ill betide,
And Phœbus lawlesse pride
Enforce me say even such my sorrows be,
For selfe disdaine in Phœbe's heart consists.

"If I behold the flowers by morning teares,
Looke lovely sweet, ah! then forlorne I crie,
Sweet showers, for Memnon shed,
All flowers by you are fed;
Whereas my piteous plaint that still appears,
Yields vigour to her scornes and makes me die.

"When I regard the pretty glee-full bird
With teare-full (yet delightfull) notes complaine,
I yield a terror with my teares;
And whilst her musicke wounds mine eares,
Alas! say I, when will my notes afford
Such like remorse who still beweepe my paine!

"When I behold upon the leaflesse bough
The haplesse bird lament her love's depart,
I draw her biding nigh,
And sitting down I sigh;
And sighing say, alas! that birds avow
A settled faith, yet Phœbe scorns my smart.

" Thus, wearie in my walke, and wofull too,
I spend the day forespent with daily griefe ;
Each object of distresse
My sorrow doth expresse,
I doate on that which doth my hart undoe,
And honour her that scornes to yeeld reliefe."

Thomas Watson has also contributed a few stanzas to this old collection of English Poetry: his " Passionate Century of Love " appeared in 1581, and but little seems to be known about him. We give one piece entitled—

THE NYMPHS MEETING THEIR MAY-QUEEN, Etc.

" With fragrant flowers we strew the way,
And make this our chief holiday ;
For though this clime were blest of yore,
Yet was it never proud before :
O beauteous Queen of second Troy,
Accept of our unfainēd joy !

" Now th' air is sweeter than sweet balm,
And satyrs dance about the palm ;
Now earth, with verdure newly dight,
Gives perfect signs of her delight :
O beauteous Queen, &c.

" Now birds record new harmony,
And trees do whistle melody ;
Now every thing that Nature breeds
Doth clad itself in pleasant weeds :
O beauteous Queen, &c."

From Bartholomew Young, who has no less than twenty-seven pieces in " England's Helicon," we shall give our next extract. Little is known of him—saving that he translated the " Diana of George of Montamay," from the Spanish, which was published in 1598.

THE NYMPH DIANA'S SONG.

" When that I, poor soul ! was born,
I was born unfortunate ;
Presently the Fates had sworn
To foretell my hapless state.
* * * *
" In my birth my mother died,
* * * *
" And the nurse that give me suck,
Hapless was in all her life ;
And I never had good luck,
Being maid or married wife.
* * * *
" With the earth would I were wed !
Than in such a grave of woes
Daily to be buriēd,
Which no end nor number knows."

So the ballad continues, stating that her father compelled her to marry when young, that she had loved one whom she afterwards slighted, and that in return he forgot her. Then she goes on describing her jealous husband—

" At his table I do eat,
In his bed with him I lie ;
But I take no rest nor meat
Without cruel jealousy.

" If I ask him what he ails,
And whereof he jealous is ?
In his answer then he fails,—
Nothing can he say to this.

" In his face there is no cheer,
But he ever hangs his head :
In each corner he doth peer,
And his speech is sad and dead :
Ill the poor soul lives, I wis,
That so hardly married is."

The following beautiful poem is anonymous :—

" Come away, come, sweet Love !
The golden morning breaks ;
All the earth, all the aire,
Of love and pleasure speaks.
Teach thine arms, then, to embrace,
And sweet rosie lips to kisse,
And mixe our soules in mutuall blisse.
Eyes were made for beautie's grace
Viewing, ruing, Love's long paine,
Procur'd by beautie's rude disdaine.

" Come away, come, sweet Love !
The golden morning wasts ;
While the sunne from his sphere
His fierie arrows casts ;
Making all the shadowes flie ;
Playing, staying in the grove,
To entertaine the stealth of love.
Thither, sweet love, let us hie :
Flying, dying, in desire,
Wing'd with sweet hopes and heavenly fire.

" Come away, come, sweet Love !
Doe not in vain adorne
Beautie's grace, that should rise,
Like to the naked morne.
Lillies on the river's side,
And faire Cyprian flowers newe blowne,
Desire no beautie's but their owne.
Ornament is nurse of pride ;
Pleasure measures Love's delight.
Haste, then, sweet Love ! our wished flight."

There is all the quaint conceit which abounds in the writers of the Elizabethan period, in the subjoined extract. It was written by Sir John Dyer, Chancellor of the Garter, his name is mentioned by Sir Philip Sydney in his Preface to the " Arcadia."

THE SHEPHERD'S CONCEIT.

" Prometheus, when first from heaven high
He brought down fire, ere then on earth unseen,
Fond of delight, a satyr, standing by,
Gave it a kiss as it like sweet had been.

" Feeling forthwith the other burning power,
Mad with the smart, with shouts and shriekings shrill
He sought his ease in river, field, and bower,
But for the time his grief went with him still.

" So silly I, with that unwonted sight
In human shape, an angel from above
Feeding mine eyes, th' impression there did light,
That since, I run and rest as pleaseth Love.—
The difference is, the satyr's lips—my heart:
He for awhile—I evermore have smart."

With the following by Sir Philip Sidney, (who has fourteen poems in this collection,) we must conclude, not having given specimens of more than half the authors who contributed to this ancient Poetical Miscellany:—

" The nightingale, so soon as April bringeth
Unto her rested sense a perfect waking,
While late bare earth, proud of new clothing, springeth,
Sings out her woes, a thorn her song-book making;
And mournfully bewailing,
Her throat in tunes expresseth,
What grief her heart oppresseth,
For Tereus' force on her chaste will prevailing.

" Oh! Philomela fair, Oh! take some gladness
That here is juster cause of plaintful sadness;
Thine earth now springs—mine fadeth:
Thy throne without—my throne my heart invadeth.

"Alas! she hath no cause of languish
But Tereus' love, on her by strong hand wroten;
Wherein she, suffering all her spirit's languish,
Full woman-like complains her will is broken:
But I who, daily craving,
Cannot have to content me,
Have more cause to lament me,
Since wanting is more woe than too much having.
Oh! Philomela fair, &c."

Here, then, terminate our extracts from a volume which, nearly up to the year 1700, was considered the chief collection of the day, and which had at last become so rare, that a copy at George Steevens's sale produced eleven pounds fifteen shillings. It has since then been reprinted; but only a small edition, we believe, was struck off, and its price would prevent it from falling into many hands. The quotations which we have made are but little known; very few of them will be found in any collection of poetry which has yet appeared: such pieces as have before been quoted, we have (saving in one or two instances) entirely avoided. We considered it unnecessary to follow up our extracts with remarks, after the manner in which we treated the poetry of William Browne; as these pieces were more detached, and in most instances more imaginary, while in the other there were many descriptions of nature which we felt ourselves bound to point out and dwell upon, as most of the works to which our humble name is prefixed, profess to treat upon rural scenery, and rural subjects.

THE YOUNG OUTLAW.

When shaws been sheene, and shruddes full fayre,
And leaves both large and longe,
It 's merry walking in the fayre forest,
To heare the small birds' songe.
The woodweele sange, and wold not cease,
Sitting upon the spraye,
Soe lowde, he wakened Robin Hood,
In the greenwood where he laye.

OLD BALLAD.

ONE of my youthful playmates, whose brains were half-turned by reading romances and old ballad lore, came to the resolution of leading the life of an outlaw, and living in the greenwood like Robin Hood. From a child he prided himself on his archery, and spent every halfpenny he could "rap and ring" together in purchasing catgut for his bows, and iron heads for his arrows; and when he could muster no money, he would betake himself to the blacksmith's, and hammer out old nails to the best shape he could to point his shafts. Not a sparrow could alight within reach of his woodland weapon but an arrow was launched at him; and although he was never known in all his life to hit one, yet it must be confessed that he sometimes came "very near." One old game-cock, which had strutted for years in his father's farmyard, was so accustomed to our hero's shafts, that he fairly set him at defiance, and would peck about within half a score yards of our archer, and only just lift up his legs now

and then, as if cock-sure that he should never be hit. Sometimes, too, this courageous chanticleer would give a most provoking crow at the youth's departure; when, very un-Robin Hood-like, the irritated archer would return and assail him with a volley of stones. A proud day was that for the youth when, after about twenty shots, he struck the head of the old sow; and although she continued rooting up the earth as if unconscious of the blow, yet it was a great feat to know that the arrow hit her;—that very night, too, he lodged a shaft in the gate post, while standing at least a distance of eight yards. The next day he dragged the green baize cloth from off his mother's dining-table, bringing down by the sudden jerk the huge tea-caddy, and scattering the six-shilling hyson upon the floor;—this he replaced as he best could, with no small addition of sand, with which the stone pavement was plentifully besprinkled. He threw the mantle over his shoulder, and hastened to show his companion Bob this new cloak of Lincoln green. Bob was a shrewd boy; and believing his old playmate to be half-cracked, had consented to play the part of Sancho to our Don, and join him in his woodland life as a second Little John.

Our young enthusiast now began to make all necessary preparations; he plundered his father's plantations of the young ashes for bows, and spent hours in the manufacturing of arrows, and was a constant attendant at the forge, much to the annoyance of the old blacksmith, who, however, after listening to his accounts of the exploits he boasted of achieving, only replied "Thou 'rt daft, Jacky,—mad as a March hare." But Jacky continued to read the garland, and to brood over the exploits of the bold outlaw, in spite of the cold hopes held out by the man of iron, and the dry arguments of Bob. His dreams were now of fallow-deer bounding through green glades, and the loud laughter of "merry men" rest-

ing under some old oak tree. The sound of bugle horns rung upon his slumbers; he shot sheriffs in his sleep, and rescued his followers even at the foot of the "gallows-tree." In a word, there was nothing of which he read that he did not think himself able to achieve.

He arose one morning and hastened to meet Bob: he was determined to linger no longer. He found his companion weeding in a neighbouring field; and, throwing himself down on a grassy hillock, began, "in a strain worthy of a hero of romance." "Bob," said he, "I take my departure to-morrow; my home in future shall be the wide woods, and my food the beasts of the chase. If thou wilt follow my fortunes, speak; if not, stay behind and remain my father's slave."

"You had better get up," replied Bob; "or else you'll happen to catch a precious cold with lying on that wet grass. You should have brought your great coat, and gotten used to it by degrees. I'll be bound Robin Hood didn't go into his hard way of living all at once; and I think we'd better stay till another summer."

"It becomes not the hardy forester to shrink from the cold," replied our hero, slightly coughing. "The brave outlaws bore all weathers, and were as warm before their forest fire as the old baron in his hall. I shall soon kill deer enow to furnish us with skins to build a tent, and at least erect you a shelter. As for myself, I would not crave a better bed than the fallen leaves, when I am weary of the chase."

"That's all very fine talking, my young measter," answered Bob, still pulling up the weeds; "but I've never seen many deer, and I believe that Robin Hood shot most of them in his day; and as to your killing plenty of game, you must have got a deal better aim since you shot at one of the sheep, and missed it nine times hand running. And

about standing cold, I can take my share of that any how; and if I go with you, we shall see who can stand the most. But I would advise you to wait till another summer; happen you 'll be able to hit a sheep in less than nine shots before then."

"Not another day," added the archer, springing up indignantly. "To-morrow night I sleep beneath some broad oak tree; Warton wood shall be my resting place; and this good cloak of Lincoln green," added he, displaying the table-cloth, "my covering."

"Isn't there a barn or a hovel? or wouldn't it be better to steal a few sheaves of straw, to take with us?" inquired the ever-cautious Bob. "If there 's a barn, you know, we might as well get used to it by degrees, and lie a bit nearer the door every night, until we can stand the open air better. Besides, we shall want a pot to boil the turnips in, that we thieve; and a tinder-box. You never see those gipsy chaps without a good big pot, and a frying-pan, and a few blankets; and some of those folks are 'nation hard, I can tell you,— as hard as Robin Hood, or Little John, or any of those fellows, ever were."

"Thou art but an ignorant clod-hopper," replied the hero indignantly, "to think of comparing the Outlaw of Sherwood Forest to a paltry race of thieves and fortune-tellers, when Robin Hood entertained kings. Were it in those days when there were no laws, I would draw my long bow and shoot thee through the ribs. But I pity thine ignorance, Bob," added he, with the scorn of a warrior; "thou hast never read Robin Hood's Garland."

"Well," and if I never did read the book you talk of," replied Bob, sulkily, "I know those who are none the wiser for all their reading; but fancy they can shoot stags like bold Robin, and knock down castles, like Oliver Cromwell. But if I don't know much about such matters as

these, I know what it is to stand the cold; for I've often been out with our shepherd all night in the lambing season; and you'll have enough of it before the first night's over, or I shall be nationally mistaken. But, however, if you will go a Robin-Hooding, why, I'll go with you,—honour bright; but, as your father says, you'll be the first to find it out."

"Thou art a noble fellow, Bob," replied our hero, seizing the red cold hand of his hardy companion; "and I will, ere long, make thee a gallant archer. We will live on pheasants, my boy, and have hares every day, if we like, while partridges shall be our commonest food. We shall be free as kings, and have no one to order us."

"Hares and such like things, I dare say, are very good," replied Bob; but I think it wouldn't be amiss to take a piece of cold bacon, a lump of cheese, and a loaf, in case you should happen to miss when you shoot, because you know they are not so big as the old sow. And you may do as you like; but I shall take the horse-cloth out of the stable. Your father said I might go with you some day a Robin-Hooding, but hoped you wouldn't pelt the old cock again with pebbles."

Our hero's father was a good-natured farmer of the old school, and let his son follow the bent of his humour without thwarting him; but contented himself with saying, "the first day will bring him to his senses." There was also a perfect understanding between himself and Bob; so that he was fully apprized of his intention to start in the morning, and, as the wood was only two fields distant, had no doubt of their finding their road home at night-fall.

The next day the two youths sallied forth, Bob carrying a good store of provender in his cotton handkerchief, and with the horse-cloth over his shoulder, as he said "it might rain." Our hero was armed with a couple of bows and a huge bundle of arrows, and a heart as light as ever beat in

the breast of the famous forester, whose deeds he was so ambitious to emulate. They entered Warton wood, which extends nearly three miles in length.

"To-day," said the young archer, leading the way, "I shall not, perhaps, kill much game; but we will look out for a glade to build our tent in, and to-morrow you can fetch the iron pot which Betty has promised us; but I never read that Robin Hood carried such things."

"Happen not," answered Bob; "and as to killing much, I dare say Betty's words will prove true. I shall be able to carry it all home in my eye. But see! see! there's a squirrel in that tree. Make haste!—About a hundred squirrel-skins stitched together would make a capital coverlid. Aim at his eye."

The hero bent his bow, took aim, and his arrow stuck in one of the huge branches of the tree; while the squirrel, which was far beyond bow-shot, never once changed his position. Arrow after arrow followed; but the highest which he shot came not within ten feet of where the prey was perched. Bob looked out for a stone to pelt him down, but there was none at hand.

"We cannot eat squirrels," said the hero, picking up his arrows. "If one could but see a stag, that would be worth trying for."

"If we were near Nottingham," said Bob, "we might climb over Lord Middleton's park wall. I remember seeing a few stags there, when I went to my uncle's."

They wandered along further into the wood, and started a pheasant or two; but long before the archer could bend his bow, the lordly bird had shot out of sight, with a loud 'whir." Bob showed his teeth, and remained silent for some time, until, growing towards noon, he felt hungry; and seating himself by the stem of a huge oak, began to spread out his fare.

"I was afraid," said he, "we shouldn't kill many pheasants, and Betty told me as hares were not in season. So she packed me up some bacon and bread, and a nice slice of ham for yourself. She also gave me a bottle of beer, which I thought would be better than the gurgling brooks you used to talk about; because there 's often dead leaves in them, and lots of newts, and frogs, and toads. Here 's a bit of new milk cheese, too. I dare say Robin Hood would have given his best bow for a mouthful of it sometimes."

Our hero fell to work with a true woodland appetite; and the handkerchief was much lighter when they had finished their repast: and, while eating, the thought struck him, that had it not been for the foresight of his companion, Robin-Hooding would have been hard work on an empty stomach.

They continued their rambles until night-fall. Bob, however, as their shadows began to lengthen, contriving, by some circuitous manœuvre, that sunset should find them on that side of the wood nearest home.

"Well," said the attendant, "the crows have all gone to roost. We have had a whole day of it and killed nothing; and the handkerchief's quite empty. Don't you think its high time we went home?"

"No, Bob," replied the hero; "you can go if you like; but they shall never say that I gave up after so short a trial."

"Well," answered Bob, throwing himself down under a tree by the road side, "you 'll perhaps think better on it after a while. Betty said she should leave the door on the latch; so, you know, nobody will be any the wiser about us coming back until to-morrow."

The Young Outlaw answered not; but throwing himself down on his green baize, lay gazing at the stars, as one by one they seemed to break through the blue curtaining of heaven.

"Bob," said he, after a long silence, "if I thought that my father wouldn't know, we might go home for a few hours, and then set out again to-morrow before he gets up. It is rather cold; and in a day or two we might build a tent."

But Bob heard him not; for he had covered himself over the head with the capacious horse-cloth, and was fast asleep.

"I must wake him," continued the hero, his teeth now chattering in his head. "He was right; he can stand the cold best; and I begin to want my supper. But I would sooner die than go home if we had a tent."

After many a hearty shake, Bob was roused. He listened to the proposed scheme without astonishment, took up the empty bottle and cover, and departed. They had only across two fields to travel. The grass was wet with the night dew, and the air very chilly; but these were trifles to the hardy rustic, and he walked through the darkness like a brave fellow, while the archer followed behind, very unlike Robin Hood, with his hands in his pockets, and his shoulders up. He approached the farm-house with the stealthy stride of a robber. Bob, however, gave more than once a loud hem, as if he had not so much cause to fear the discovery of his return. The latch was uplifted silently, and a blaze of light streamed from the open door-way. It was too late to retreat; there sat the good-humoured farmer in his arm-chair, with his pipe and brown jug before him. He only said "It 's lucky the door was not bolted;" and then pointed to an adjoining table, on which stood their suppers, and, having finished his pipe, retired to rest.

This hasty sketch is founded on fact; and only a sudden discovery, at the eleventh hour, prevented the author from sharing in the adventure. For several of us (all mere boys) had agreed to leave our homes and betake ourselves to the woods,— there to live like the outlaws of old. Nay, we

had gone so far as to divulge our secret to some gipsies who were encamped near a neighbouring wood; and they, of course, gave us every encouragement; nor had we failed to observe their methods of cooking, &c. while hovering around their tents. Only two of our company, however, made the trial, and they returned on the first night. There were four beside the author; three of them have since become sailors, and made many long and perilous voyages; the other, who never entered heartily into the affair, settled down and led a steady, industrious life? while the last left home before he was fourteen, and spent some time in rambling over England, unconsciously picking up those materials which he has since made use of in his different works. That "A rolling stone gathers no moss" is fully exemplified with us all. But this banging about has rubbed off that rough crust which gathers around all stationary bodies, and brought out the nature of the pebble, which otherwise might have become overgrown or concealed, and that, too, without the world being either better or worse for the discovery.

Reader our task is done; for thee has our taper often burnt dimly through the still midnight, for many of these papers were written when the world was wrapt in slumber, and our own eyes had grown dim and heavy while pursuing this silent task. If we have in this volume set down aught amiss, aught that will either crimson a modest cheek, or pain an honest heart; it has been done unintentionally, for never would we willingly offend. Plain language have we used now and then, and spoken broadly on a few matters, which we have long had nearest at heart, but they are opinions which we have lived in, and which we fain would die in

maintaining. We have not only done our best to render this work both instructive and amusing, but gone back to the mighty poets of forgotten years, and awakened voices which have been silent for above two centuries, that we might enrich our readers with the wealth of their thoughts.

> "For there is hidden in a poet's name
> A spell that can command the wings of Fame."

THE END.

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